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UAE invites Khatami to discuss dispute

KUWAIT (R) — The United Arab Emirates Monday invited Iran's President Mohammad Khatami to visit Abu Dhabi to discuss a territorial dispute. A final statement by the Gulf Arab summit issued in Kuwait said UAE President Sheikh Zaid Ben Sultan Al Nahayan "welcomed such a meeting." Mr. Khatami, a moderate cleric in an Iranian context, has expressed readiness to go to Abu Dhabi to discuss the dispute over three strategic Gulf islands which predates the 1979 Islamist revolution in non-Arab Iran. Gulf Arab sources earlier told Reuters that Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi was due to visit Abu Dhabi soon to discuss the dispute and a possible visit by Mr. Khatami. The summit again called on Iran to reverse its "occupation" of the three islands.

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Jordan rejects Netanyahu's statement on settlements

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday blasted Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu for promising that all Jewish settlement on the occupied West Bank will remain under Israeli rule in any final peace deal with the Palestinians.

"This is totally rejected... this is a negative attitude," Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh told reporters after attending talks between Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Jordan, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, has been watching with unease a string of recent controversial statements made by Mr. Netanyahu.

On Friday, Mr. Netanyahu said that the occupied West Bank would remain part of "Israel proper." But an Israeli government spokesman retracted Mr. Netanyahu's statements and said his remarks were misinterpreted.

Dr. Tarawneh told reporters that 90 per cent of the West Bank should return to Palestinian control by June, in line with the 1993 and 1994 Israeli-Palestinian interim peace deals.

On Sunday Mr. Netanyahu promised to retain all settlements and said that his divided Israeli cabinet had to reach agreement on Israel's security needs to define the scope of a further army redeployment from West Bank areas before a planned mid-January meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Dr. Tarawneh said the fate of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, housing over 130,000 people and the future of Arab east Jerusalem were main issues to be settled in final status talks.

"It is not acceptable to put maps and say that these are the future of the [Palestinian] territories. No party has the right to decide the future of the final status negotiations," he added.

Palestinians call all the Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip occupied by Israel in 1967 illegal and fear a final peace deal which fails to uproot them will leave their territory dotted with islands of Israelis.

Under U.S. pressure to withdraw troops from the West Bank as promised under the interim peace deals, Mr. Netanyahu said his government was trying to outline Israel's ultimate West Bank security needs under a final peace accord before deciding on an interim redeployment.

Dr. Erekat, also member in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) ruling Gaza and parts of the West Bank that were returned to Palestinian control, criti-

(Continued on page 7)

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Jordanian delegates to the Doha economic summit at the Royal Court on Sunday evening (Photo by Boghos)

Regent calls for building of Kingdom's 'state sector'

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has called for enhancing cooperation between the private and public sectors to build a "state sector." This, he said, depends on collaboration among the parties concerned and accurate data in order to serve the national interest and attain sustainable development.

The Crown Prince told members of Jordanian teams that were involved in the Jordanian-European Association agreement and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) meeting held in Doha recently that construction is a collective process in which all sectors should participate.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for building a comprehensive strategy hinging on productivity and aimed at attaining what is best for the Jordanian people, benefiting from the opportunities availing themselves through Jordan's institutionalised relations with different countries around the world.

The Jordanian-European Association agreement, the Prince noted, opens new scopes of fruitful economic and cultural cooperation with 15 European nations and marks the beginning of a new phase through which Jordan can benefit from European expertise.

He said that it was necessary for Jordan to develop an administrative policy to ensure the most effective benefit from its human and natural resources in the course of building an economic policy that would protect the Kingdom's interests in an effective manner while dealing with the various regional and international economic blocs.

Stressing that openness, dialogue and constant contact with other cultures constitute basic requirements for adaptation to new international circumstances, the Regent said that these factors are bound to reflect positively on Jordan and its performance in a world which witnesses growing competition and growing trends towards integration among countries in the form of regional blocs.

Emphasising the importance of research and accurate information, the Regent said that correct data serves as a source of power for the concerned sectors.

Underlining the need for Arab integration based on collective action to attain regional development, Prince Hassan pointed out that Jordan has followed a stable policy leading towards integration with the Arab countries and opening of opportunities for economic cooperation and investment.

The Regent said that Jordan has overcome the phase of receiving direct aid from other countries and is now pursuing the course of building strong economic ties with other nations.

The Regent stressed that the coming stage requires Jordan to raise its cultural and economic levels to international standards and to benefit from the expertise of other nations, especially those that attained economic progress under similar circumstances.

The Regent compared Jordan's experiment to those of New Zealand, Vietnam and Poland.

Prince Hassan pointed to New Zealand's success in attaining the concept of "the state's sector" which groups the private and the public sectors, complementing each other. He also referred to Poland's experiment which depended mainly on the skill of its human resources to achieve success in converting a socialist economic system into a free market economy.

Prince Hassan emphasised the need for building bridges of cultural relations and enhancing humanitarian contacts with other peoples, noting that all the Arab and Islamic countries are heading in this direction as has been evident at the 8th Islamic conference in Tehran.

"We might agree or disagree in our views but we have to keep the national interests in mind and we will continue to employ our experiences and efficiency to achieve more progress for Jordan," Prince Hassan said.

Attending the dinner at the Royal Court on Sunday were Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, speakers of the Senate and Lower House of Parliament, the two deputy prime ministers as well as the ministers of foreign affairs, planning, industry, trade and supply along with other officials and representatives of Jordan's economic, industrial and

Netanyahu: Settlements will stay under Israeli rule

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has promised that all Jewish settlements on the occupied West Bank will remain under Israeli rule in any final peace deal with the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu said in a television interview on Sunday his fractious cabinet would reach agreement on Israel's security needs before a planned mid-January meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"We are not going to take down any settlement," Mr. Netanyahu said in the interview with Israel's Channel 2.

"We are not going to hand them over to Palestinian sovereignty... nor to Palestinian Authority. These settlements will remain under our full responsibility. All the settlements," Mr. Netanyahu said.

More than 130,000 Jews live in settlements scattered across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, most in blocs near the "green line" dividing the West Bank from Israel, but many in small settlements wedged between Palestinian population centres.

Palestinians call all the settlements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip captured by Israel in 1967 illegal and fear a final peace deal which fails to uproot them will leave their territory dotted with islands of hostile Israelis.

Under U.S. pressure to withdraw troops from the West Bank as promised under an interim peace deal, Mr. Netanyahu said his government was trying to outline Israel's ultimate West Bank security needs under a final peace accord before deciding on an interim redeployment.

Dozens of settlers on Sunday protested outside Mr. Netanyahu's office against any future land transfers to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Asked whether his squabbling cabinet could hammer out an agreement before January, when President Clinton plans separate talks with Mr. Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Mr. Netanyahu responded: "I think so."

He said on Friday it was not certain that a plan detailing the extent of any troop pullback would be ready in time.

President Clinton invited President Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu to Washington next month after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright failed last week to bridge gaps between them that have contributed to nine months of deadlock in peace talks.

U.S. officials have said they hope both leaders take tough decisions sought by Washington before the meetings, for which no date has yet been set.

U.N. demands unconditional access to all Iraqi palaces

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council adopted a strongly worded declaration Monday urging Iraq to give U.N. weapons inspectors immediate and unconditional access to all presidential sites.

The declaration described as "unacceptable and a clear violation of the relevant resolutions" Iraq's refusal to open up the sites to United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) weapons inspectors.

The declaration was adopted unanimously by the 15-member council.

Iraq and the Security Council remain deadlocked over whether UNSCOM inspectors will be permitted access to Iraq's presidential sites, which Baghdad calls essential to its national security and sovereignty.

"It's a very strong statement, sending an unmistakable signal to Iraq to comply to the U.N. resolutions," said Washington's U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson.

"It's been unanimous, it's been strong, it's been swift."

But the text of the proposal has already been modified to eliminate reference to "condemnation" of Baghdad contained in the wording of an earlier version.

Russia and China expressed opposition to that wording and were also pressing to soften the proposal even further with a reference to Iraq's sovereignty, diplomats said.

The text of the declaration also urges UNSCOM Chief Richard Butler to continue talks with Iraqi authorities concerning weapons inspections.

Tension over U.N. efforts to make certain that all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed flared up in recent days as Mr. Butler returned from Baghdad after failing to secure access to the sites.

Mr. Butler has charged that Iraq has concealed elements of weapons of mass destruction at sites declared off-limits to inspectors, a charge Baghdad has staunchly denied.

An oil embargo in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait can not be lifted until UNSCOM reports that Iraq no longer has the capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction.

"Sanctions on Iraq are not going to be lifted while Iraq continues to violate the Security Council resolutions on the weapons inspectors," Mr. Richardson told journalists earlier.

4 Arabic dailies boycott Parliament

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four Arabic-language dailies announced Monday that they will not cover parliamentary sessions until they are allowed free access to parliamentarians' offices. The four refrained from publishing any material on the Lower House's deliberation on Sunday.

The dailies Al Ra'i, Al Dustour, Al Aswaq and Al Arab Al Yawm, said their boycott of the sessions was in protest to new regulations issued by the Parliament's General Secretariat that limited their movement around the facilities of the House.

The four papers, in a statement handed out to several deputies on Sunday, demanded that they be treated on an equal basis with state-run media, that is ensured access to all offices.

Nabeel Gheishan, Al Arab Al Yawm parliamentary correspondent, told the Jordan Times that all reporters at the House were shocked at the way they were treated by the staff and the manner in which the House wardens barred them from reaching the chambers of the speakers of the two Houses of Parliament.

"We are surprised by this and we wish to ask the Parliament why are the state-run media allowed access to all facilities, while the local papers, that cover all sides of the story are banned and placed in a small room isolated from anyone," Mr. Ghieshan said.

He said reporters sitting on the balcony had been harassed occasionally and prevented from even leaning on the edge or putting their papers on it.

"All we ask is to be treated equally. If we had done anything wrong or offended anybody then we should have been notified, and not issued regulations as such and without cause," he said.

"As public servers, we will not return to the Parliament unless our dignity is restored and all the drastic measures taken against us are abolished," he stated.

Suleiman Qudah, the chief editor of Al Ra'i daily, said all papers decided to join forces and boycott the House sessions in protest against the new regulations that "limited the freedom of the press and restricted journalists' movement by forcing them

(Continued on page 7)

GCC rejects UAE proposal to send delegation to Baghdad

Combined agency dispatches

A PROPOSAL made by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to send a delegation to Baghdad to press for compliance with U.N. demands was rejected during a summit here of Gulf leaders, a delegate said Monday.

UAE President Sheikh Zaid Ben Sultan Al Nahyan wanted the delegation "to press the Iraqi government to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions and solve questions about Kuwaiti prisoners of war," the delegate said.

The proposal, including a suggestion that the envoy be from the UAE, was made Sunday, but was rejected at the meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), that groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Kuwait has consistently backed U.N. demands that Iraq comply with all U.N. resolutions before U.N. sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait are lifted.

But other Gulf states have not followed Kuwait's tough line, despite Kuwaiti claims that there is a single stance over Iraq. The UAE and Qatar have in the past called for swifter moves to end the embargo.

Kuwaiti Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah said in remarks published Monday, that Kuwait supports Arab reconciliation "but this does not mean and should not be understood as reconciliation with the Iraqi regime."

Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul-Aziz, heading the Saudi Arabian delegation, called for Gulf states to put the "past sufferings and events" behind them on arrival on Saturday at the summit that was due to end Monday.

President Saddam Hussein Sunday hailed a statement by Saudi Arabia's crown prince as showing the way to better relations between Iraq and the Arab Gulf states.

After a meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), Iraq's highest ruling body, a statement was issued to the official Iraqi news agency describing comments by Crown Prince Abdullah as "positive."

"The RCC wishes to see these statements lead to a new Arab diplomacy, in particular a new diplomacy among Gulf states, based on the present situation in the Arab world in order to put a stop to the negative situation prevailing between some Arab countries," the statement said.

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Israel's Levy urges Syria to resume talks

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's Foreign Minister David Levy urged Syria on Monday to resume peace talks without preconditions.

He said he had told visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen that he did not see "what sacrifice" Syria would be making by renewing talks, which were broken off early last year.

"There is no sacrifice whatsoever involved," Mr. Levy told reporters after meeting Mr. Qian, who held 90 minutes of talks with President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus on Sunday.

"Therefore I reiterated our willingness and our commitment to engage in serious negotiations with Syria in order to reach [an] agreement," Mr. Levy said.

Syria says Israel's previous Labour-led government agreed during peace talks with Damascus to withdraw fully from the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

It accuses Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, whose Likud Party defeated Labour in May 1996 elections, of reneging on that commitment.

Mr. Levy said no such undertaking had been given.

"It is a misunderstanding to believe that Israel wishes to begin the talks from square one... but at the same time I made it clear [to Mr. Qian] that there was absolutely no agreement signed between Israel and Syria in the previous talks," Mr. Levy said.

"We are willing to proceed with talks with Syria on the basis of those understandings which were reached in the various discussion groups but not on the basis of any supposed agreements that were signed between the sides."

Mr. Qian, who is on a tour of the Middle East for talks on the stalled peace process, said he had conveyed Syria's view to Mr. Levy. He told Reuters in Damascus on Saturday that China viewed Syria's demand as "reasonable and we support it fully."

China, one of the main arms suppliers to Syria, maintains close cooperation ties with Damascus. It sealed diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992.

Mr. Qian said China did not see itself as a mediator in the Middle East peace process but wanted to "offer its views and perspectives in a frank and sincere manner."

Progress towards peace between Israel and the Arab world was "in the interests of all the parties concerned," he said.

Mr. Qian was scheduled to meet Mr. Netanyahu later on Monday and to hold talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Tuesday. He will also visit Egypt.

PALESTINIAN SANTA: A Palestinian man dressed as Santa Claus shares the joy of the holiday season with Palestinian people in the Manger Square Monday near the Church of the Nativity, traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ. As Christmas approaches more and more tourists are flocking to Bethlehem (Reuters photo)

Tarshihi submits report detailing Israeli violations in occupied territories

CAIRO (Petra) — A report outlining Israel's continued violations in the occupied Palestinian territories was submitted by the Department of Palestinian Affairs Director Ibrahim Tarshihi Monday to a conference in Cairo of Arab countries supervising Palestinian refugees' affairs.

The report pointed to the confiscation of Arab-owned lands, the detention of thousands of Palestinians, and the demolition of Arab-owned homes, among other practices.

The report also detailed Israel's plans to Judaise the Arab city of Jerusalem and noted Jordan's continued contacts with Arab and Islamic countries and world organisations to exert pressure on the Jewish state to rescind its measures and respect international law.

The report also outlined Jordan's continuous efforts to secure the release of Palestinian detainees from Israeli jails and its diplomatic endeavours at the international level to safeguard Jerusalem and protect Arab rights in the city in the face of Israel's settlement programmes.

The report provided details on the social and economic conditions of the Arab inhabitants under Israeli rule and the Kingdom's agreements with the Palestine National Authority to help support the Palestinian people and allow the Palestinians to export goods via the bridges on the Jordan River to the Arab and outside worlds.

Meanwhile, in an interview published Monday in Al Ahram Arabic daily in Cairo, Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh said the Israelis are not ready for a final status solution and warned that unless the peace process is brought back to the right track, the whole Middle East will witness dangerous developments.

Referring to the Tehran Islamic summit, he said for the first time the Islamic countries conveyed to the world their unified stand and their determination to deal with social, economic, and humanitarian issues affecting their nations. Referring to Jordan's relations with Israel, Dr. Tarawneh said the Kingdom is not bound to Israel by a military alliance or military cooperation agreement.

He noted that the two sides maintain security coordination, a situation that he said exists between any two countries in the world.

'Attackers kill 15 villagers in Algeria'

PARIS (R) — An armed gang cut the throats of 15 civilians in a hamlet in western Algeria and kidnapped five other villagers, an Algerian newspaper said Monday.

The attackers stormed Al Bordj village in Tlemcen province, 440 kilometres west of Algiers, overnight Saturday and Sunday, took 15 people from their homes and slashed their throats, Liberte newspaper said.

No one claimed responsibility. The government made no comment and no independent confirmation of the circumstances or the identity of the attackers was available.

More than 65,000 people have been killed in the violence that started early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

The latest killing was the fourth reported massacre in the past six days and a total of at least 90 civilians were killed in those incidents, according to newspapers.

Thousands of civilians died in similar massacres earlier this year for which the authorities blamed Islamist rebels.

Le Matin newspaper Monday implored President Liamine Zeroual to break the official silence on the killings.

"Zeroual put our minds at ease. The government said nothing while the killers were speaking up," it wrote in an editorial.

In another incident in Tlemcen, gunmen killed a 65-year-old man at a fake roadblock in Sabra area Sunday night, said Al Khabar.

The newspaper said government forces freed two people held by gunmen Sunday at a fake roadblock in the neighbouring Hamara area.

Two bomb explosions rocked Tlemcen town the same day, said Liberte. The report did not say whether there were casualties.

One person was wounded in a bomb explosion Sunday at Ouled Hadria area in Medea, 70 kilometres south of Algiers, said Liberte.

Soldiers killed six suspected Islamist rebels Saturday at Sidi Bouabdia village in Ain Defla region, 130 kilometres southwest of Algiers, Al Khabar said.

Iraqi paper urges government to expel U.N. inspectors in case of U.S. attack

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi newspaper Monday urged the government to expel U.N. arms inspectors again and suspend cooperation with them if the United States launched a military attack on Iraq.

"Iraq should respond to any further U.S. aggression on its people by expelling all politically motivated personnel within UNSCOM [U.N. Special Commission] and refrain from cooperating with this commission," the daily English-language Baghdad Observer said in a commentary.

The United States Sunday stepped up its campaign to put diplomatic pressure on Iraq to allow U.N. inspectors access to suspected weapons sites.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said on the CBS television programme "Face the Nation": "We hope to pursue this in diplomatic channels and see if we can't exhaust all reasonable opportunities to do that."

But neither Mr. Cohen nor U.S. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, speaking on ABC's "This Week" television programme, ruled out military options to force Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to comply.

The United States has assembled a strong military force in the Gulf region.

Iraq briefly expelled American members of the U.N. inspection teams in November, sparking a standoff with the United Nations and the U. S.

UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler then withdrew almost all arms inspectors from Baghdad and Washington sent military forces to the Gulf.

Iraq let the inspectors including Americans back in after winning pledges from mediator Russia to push for an end to U.N. sanctions imposed on Baghdad after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. But it has declared that so-called "presidential sites" are off-limits to UNSCOM.

"Butler is trying to serve U.S. interests by creating a crisis between Iraq and the United Nations that could be used by the Clinton administration as a pretext to launch aggression on Iraq," the paper said.

The government newspaper Al Jumhouriya accused UNSCOM of recruiting officers from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

"The commission is depending mainly on officers from the American intelligence," it said.

The paper also said the commission was relying on hostile intelligence services for information concerning Iraq's weapons programmes and called for setting a neutral committee to check the data.

The ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said that even if Iraq allowed U.N. inspectors into the disputed sites, Washington would find an excuse to create another crisis.

"No one should think that if Iraq accepts the inspection of presidential sites, America would agree to implement paragraph 22 [of the U.N. Resolution 687]," the paper said.

The paragraph would allow Iraq free oil exports if UNSCOM certified that Baghdad was clear of weapons of mass destruction.

The paper repeated a statement issued by Iraqi leaders Saturday saying that Iraq would not remain idle in the face of the "American game" aiming at prolonging sanctions.

Turkish Kurd guerrilla chief faces death penalty

ANKARA (R) — Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocarina, being tried in absentia in Turkey, faces the death penalty for treason and crimes against the state, state-run Anatolian news agency said on Monday.

"Ocarina... faces the death penalty on charges of treason and committing crimes against the state's unity," the agency said.

Ocarina, who has led a violent campaign for Kurdish self-rule in Turkey's southeast, is believed to live in the Syrian capital Damascus or the Bekaa valley in Lebanon.

More than 27,000 people have died in the 13-year-old conflict. Ocarina, commonly known as Pa, has not attended the trial which started in October.

Anatolian said seven other people charged in the same case were accused of spreading separatist propaganda in a panel discussion on pro-Kurdish television channel Med TV.

Compromise candidate elected to head World Likud movement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's ruling Likud movement elected a compromise candidate early Monday to head its international branch following a violent dispute between supporters and opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

Israel's former ambassador to Washington, Zalman Shoval, was elected chairman of the World Likud movement in the middle of the night after Mr. Netanyahu convinced two other candidates, Communications Minister Limor Livnat and Mr. Netanyahu's former chief of staff Avigdor Lieberman, to withdraw from the race, Likud officials said.

Mr. Livnat had the backing of Mr. Netanyahu's leading critics within Likud, including outgoing World Likud chairman and Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and former finance minister Dan Meridor.

Mr. Lieberman was supported by Mr. Netanyahu and a group of far-right Likud militants, notably a large delegation from France.

This year's meeting of the World Likud movement, which groups supporters of the right-wing party in Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, erupted into fist fights Sunday as backers of Mr. Livnat and Mr. Lieberman battled over which delegates were eligible to vote for the post of chairman.

When the French delegation was refused entry to the pool of voting delegates, Mr. Lieberman stormed out of the meeting, which later broke up in chaos.

Mr. Milo then announced that he was cancelling the remainder of the convention after learning that some delegates, apparently Lieberman supporters, planned further violence at Monday's meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu intervened in the middle of the night to get the rival camps to accept Mr. Shoval as a compromise candidate, party officials said.

Mr. Lieberman, 38, was credited with masterminding Mr. Netanyahu's campaign to capture the Likud leadership in 1993 and has since been seen as central in efforts to sideline potential rivals to his boss.

He was forced to resign as Mr. Netanyahu's chief of staff last month after infuriating Likud veterans by mounting a campaign to reform internal party election procedures to increase Mr. Netanyahu's hold over the group.

The position of World Likud chairman is largely ceremonial, but the battle for the position this year was seen as a new test of strength for the growing opposition within the right to Mr. Netanyahu's style of governing.

Likud veterans accuse the prime minister of running the government with a small coterie of close aides while ignoring the opinions of his ministers and party colleagues.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO
14:10 ....Sandokan
14:30....C.R.O.
15:00 ....Skippy
15:30 ....The Album Show
16:30 ....Square One T.V.
17:00 ....French Programmes
19:00 ....News in French
19:30 ....News Headlines
19:35 ....You Bet Your Life
20:00 ....Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30....Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 ....News in English
22:30 ....Magaret Volant
23:15 Drama — Scarlet and Black

PRAYER TIMES

05:05....Fajr
06:28....(Sunrise) Duha
11:35....Dhuhr
14:19 ....'Asr
16:41....Maghreb
18:04....'Isha

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Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
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German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
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English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative cold weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance of scattered showers particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 04/11
Aqaba 08/19
Deserts 03/13
Jordan Valley 09/18

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 19 Humidity readings: Amman 69 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mazen Nbali 830435
Dr. Fayez Dabbas....759155
Dr. Adnan Zagloul....898140
Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi....5522233
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy ...637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
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Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy ....(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Mazen Saffarini....985832
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

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Civil Defence Dept 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency ..199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance).... 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority.... 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
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HOSPITALS

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Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity....644281/6
Akileh Maternity....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir....775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ....(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ....(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ....(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ....(02)247100

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ARRIVALS

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07:15 ....Sanaa (RJ)
07:25 ....Damascus (RJ)
09:25 ....Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 ....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 ....Beirut (RJ)
10:15 ....Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 ....Cairo (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30 ....London, Frankfurt (RJ)
02:00 ....Jeddah (RJ)
06:00 ....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
14:35 ....Istanbul (TK)
14:40 .... Munich (YP)
16:30 ....Rome (AZ)
18:30 .. Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00 ....Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 ....Beirut (ME)
20:40 ....Cairo (MS)
22:20 ....London (BA)
23:35 ....Amsterdam (KL)
23:35 ....Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:45 ....Aqaba (RW)
09:05 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 .... Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 ....Aqaba (RW)
22:50 ...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 ....Beirut (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:15 ....Vienna, Brussels (RJ)
12:05 ....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10....Paris (RJ)
12:15 ....London (RJ)
12:30 ....Frankfurt (RJ)
12:30....Cairo (RJ)
19:30 ....Jeddah (RJ)
20:20 ....Larnaca (RJ)
20:30....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:40 ....Damascus (RJ)
21:00....Abu Dhabi Dubai (RJ)
01:00 ....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:00..Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
02:25 ....Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 ....Athens (OA)
15:40 ....Munich (YP)
15:45 ....Istanbul (TK)
17:30 ....Rome (AZ)
19:30 ....Dubai (EK)
21:20 ....Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 ....Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 ....Aqaba (RW)
09:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 ....Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 ....Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 ....Aqaba (RW)

Canadian government contributes JD20,650 to centre for abused children

AMMAN (J.T.) — Canada will contribute the sum of JD20,650 towards the construction of a pilot community centre for abused children, a project being undertaken by the Jordan River Development Projects Society (JRDPS), in accordance with an agreement signed at the Royal Court Monday.

HRH Princess Rania, chairperson of the JRDPS board, signed the agreement for the JD64,000 project along with Daniel Joly, the chargé d'affaires at the Canadian embassy in Jordan.

The centre, which will be erected in Prince Hassan Camp within three months, will be dedicated to the protection of children in Jordan.

The community centre will conduct workshops, raise public awareness, and educate families, children, and members of the concerned authorities about the damaging effects of child abuse and the importance of a child's fundamental right to healthy development, dignity, and self-esteem.

The project includes the publication of materials and presentations at schools throughout Jordan to raise awareness of the problem in all sectors of the community.

The centre will also include a shelter for abused children, supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide them with access to professionals who can help them, such as psychologists, physicians, and lawyers.

In addition, the project aims at mobilising all concerned authorities to review and amend relevant legislation to ensure implementation of the articles of the Convention of the Right of the Child. The staff will be working in cooperation with the concerned ministries, the police, and the National Task Force for Children with the goal of reducing the incidence of child abuse in Jordan.

The Prince Hassan Camp was selected as the site for the pilot project because it was felt that the location is very appropriate due to the poor economic status of its inhabitants. The society believes that unemployment, poverty, and poor and crowded living conditions are factors that aggravate child abuse.

HRH Princess Rania and Daniel Joly, the charge d'affaires at the Canadian embassy, Monday sign an agreement in which Canada will contribute JD20,650 towards the construction of a centre for abused children (Petra photo)

Witness offers testimony in trial of 3 charged with smuggling weapons

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A prosecution witness in the trial of three people accused of plotting subversive acts and smuggling weapons told the State Security Court Monday that he seized a suitcase filled with weapons and ammunition in an area near the Dead Sea.

Ismat Shukri, 35, and Ali A. and Mohammad M., both being tried in absentia, are charged with manufacturing explosives in 1995 with the intent of using them against tourists and smuggling weapons to the West Bank from 1995 to 1997 via the Dead Sea.

Major Kamal S., 37, from the General Intelligence Department (GID), stated that he examined a suitcase that was found by security forces in the Zarah area on Feb. 14, 1997.

"I found army uniforms with ranks that belonged to the Palestinian National Authority, an M60 automatic weapon, a gun, and live bullets," the witness said.

Another GID witness, Major Habess M., who was assigned to interrogate Mr. Shukri on March 10, said the defendant "confessed willingly to the charges."

"The defendant was not subjected to any form of torture or threats, and he confessed willingly to the arms smuggling and to possessing the explosives," the GID official said.

Another prosecution witness, Second Lt. Ibrahim Mustafa, 36, testified under oath that he searched Mr. Shukri's house in Mahata and found an automatic weapon, binoculars, live bullets, and two tear gas canisters.

First Lt. Ali Mohammad, a criminal lab expert in chemistry, testified that he examined a box in the suitcase filled with potassium nitrate and determined that it was used in manufacturing explosives.

The prosecution is charging that the suitcase belonged to Mr. Shukri.

Attorney Saleh Armouti, who was speaking on behalf of the seven-member defence team, repeatedly contested the witnesses' testimonies in court, challenging the legality of the interrogations and claiming that his client was subjected to torture.

However, the court rejected his pleas, stating that "it is too early to determine the legality of the investigation procedures."

The defence team had recently contested the investigation procedures and claimed that their clients were subjected to torture by the security forces.

The military court, headed by Judge Yousef Fa'ouri and including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Fawaz Boqour, adjourned the session to Dec. 28 to hear more prosecution witnesses in the case.

Government asked to examine conditions at Salt prison following complaints

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Royal Court will ask the government to look into the conditions at Salt prison in response to complaints by relatives of over 30 inmates, a senior official told the Jordan Times Monday.

The move came after 100 relatives of the prisoners and detainees appealed to His Majesty King Hussein Thursday to improve the allegedly appalling conditions at the prison.

They assembled at the gates of the Royal Palace and met Assistant Royal Court Chief Ghazi Hadeed, the fiancée of one of the prisoners told the Jordan Times.

"The Royal Palace is dealing with this as a humanitarian case," the senior official said. "It will not be looking into the merits of the specific cases involved, but will rather examine the conditions of the jail in response to the complaints."

He gave no further details.

According to the Jordan chapter of the Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights, there are over thirty "political prisoners" in Jordan. However, it remains unclear whether all have been charged by the courts.

The organisation said all the so-called "political prisoners" and detainees were transferred to the Salt prison from Sawaqa rehabilitation centre three months ago.

Their relatives and human rights groups contend that the prison has small cells and poor ventilation and sanitation facilities.

"All the prisoners are kept in two cells and the health conditions are so bad there that some people are getting sick," said the fiancée. "One of the prisoners was taken to hospital due to an illness caused by the lack of cleanliness."

"We are given five minutes of visitation rights three times a week and we usually have to wait for hours before we get to see them," she added. "And when we talk via telephones across a glass partition, we cannot hear anything they are saying."

Her 29 year-old fiancé was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of planning to kill an Israeli tourist two years ago.

The relatives said they have petitioned the prime minister, the professional associations, lawyers, and various human rights organisations to help them improve the jail conditions and to secure the release of the prisoners.

"We will soon approach the new Parliament and we are also planning to turn the political prisoners' case into a full public awareness campaign," said the fiancée.

The definition of a "political prisoner" and a "prisoner of conscience," and the subsequent application of law, has always been problematic in Jordan, said Asma Khader, a lawyer and a human rights activist.

"Also, according to the Jordanian penal code, a person can be charged for either belonging to an unlicensed political party or an organisation, or for being a member of one that is opposed to the regime," she added.

She said a contradiction exists between local laws and several international human rights laws to which Jordan is a signatory. The United Nations Human Rights Declaration, for instance, stipulates that a person cannot be charged solely for belonging to an anti-regime organisation, unless he or she has acted upon this.

"Since none of the prisoners are militaristic, even though some were members of outlawed parties and organisations, human rights groups have taken up the cause of 'political prisoners' here," she added.

PSD celebrates Arab Police Day, expresses commitment to security

By Rana Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday celebrated Arab Police Day by presenting awards to a number of people and police officers for their contributions to the cause of security in the country.

Speaking at a ceremony held at the Police Academy to mark the occasion, Colonel Mohammad Salman said the PSD realises the criminal threats resulting from technological advances and is exerting efforts to combat crime.

"The PSD has become a modern force that works on insuring stability, security, and democracy, protecting human rights, and implementing the law," Col. Salman told the more than 700 in attendance.

Retired Major General Mahmoud Abu Hmour delivered an address on behalf of the PSD's ex-service personnel and paid tribute to the role of the department in preserving security and stability.

"The PSD realises that its role is to preserve comprehensive security for the nation and its citizens," he said.

At the celebration, several retired PSD personnel and families of police officers killed in the line of duty were honoured by directors of the PSD, General Security Department, and Civil Defence Department (CDD) in appreciation for their outstanding efforts in serving the department and national security.

The PSD also honoured media personnel and citizens who helped the police solve murder and theft cases.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, to mark the occasion, PSD Chief Lieutenant General Nasouh Muhiddin said: "Jordan is distinguished from other countries in the region with its peace and stability."

Further, the police chief said the PSD has directed its efforts to insuring stability for the citizens of this country by implementing the comprehensive security concept, which he said is built on mutual respect between the police and the citizens.

Lt. Gen. Muhiddin stated that the crime rate has declined and that the PSD managed to close the file on several unsolved murders and stop several drug smugglers.

Lt. Gen. Mohammad Tarazi, assistant to the PSD director for judicial affairs, said crime in Jordan is "affected by social developments and changes."

"Crime in our society reflects controversial phenomena that resulted from the economic and social developments over the past ten years," Lt. Gen. Tarazi said, adding that "one society is clean of a dangerous phenomenon, which is organised crime."

But he warned of the problem, which has increased rapidly in the past few years.

"We should not close our eyes to this problem, but instead admit that we have a problem and try to fight it," he said.

The newly-appointed head of the Public Relations Department at the PSD, Lt. Col. Ahmad Rifai, stressed that his department has always exerted efforts to establish good relations with the media. He called on the media to contact the department to ensure a credible and honest story.

Lecture on strange plant to be given today

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "The Strangest Plant in the World" is the title of a lecture to be given today by Lytton Musselman at the Fulbright House in Amman.

"Imagine a plant that produces ill-scented flowers under ground, hunted by elephants and rhinoceroses, sought by bushmen as food, and harvested on a large scale for its use as a medicine," Dr. Musselman told the Jordan Times.

These are features of the African genus, Hydnora, he explained, one of two groups in the bizarre family Hydnoraceae.

The other, he continued, is Prosopanche, a New World counterpart with correspondingly weird features.

Since 1982, this family of parasitic plants has been the subject of a study by Dr. Musselman, currently Fulbright professor in the department of Biological Sciences at the University of Jordan.

His current researches in Jordanian centres on parasitic plants focus on those that cause extensive losses to vegetable crops.

Other ethnobonatical researches, he explained, are plants used in ancient Middle East, including plants of the Bible.

His worldwide publications include several books and over 100 journal articles.

Dr. Musselman said over the past ten years he has lectured extensively on parasitic plants and Biblical plants in India, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North and South America.

He has also been a visiting professor in the Fulbright programme at the University of Khartoum in Sudan and Al Najah University in Nablus.

Psychiatrist refutes mental illness claim of Syrian charged with triple murder

By Rana Husseini
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A psychiatrist testifying in the trial of a 35-year-old man accused of killing a Syrian family in June told the Criminal Court Monday that the defendant did not suffer from any mental illnesses.

"During my examination of Mr. Jlasi, I found no proof that he suffered from any mental diseases," Khalil Zaki Abu Znad, 55, told the court.

Dr. Abu Znad was testifying in the case of Fateh Jlasi, a Syrian national, who reportedly confessed to authorities on June 19 to murdering Jamal Abdo, 38, his wife Manal Othman, 35, and their son Khalid, 2, on June 17 for reasons connected with financial problems with Mr. Abdo's father.

On Saturday, however, Mr. Jlasi retracted his confession to the authorities and denied being the killer of the family, claiming in court that he only wanted to abduct the family for ransom. He claimed that three other people, by whom he was threatened because he owed them money, were the actual killers.

The defendant further claimed that he has suffered from depression and mental problems since 1978 and that he was a short-tempered person.

"I examined the defendant once, in 1979, and concluded that he suffered from a physical illness caused by mental stress," Dr. Abu Znad said.

According to the charge sheet, the suspect, who entered the Kingdom in March to kill the family, went to their house three months later, drugged them, killed Mr. Abdo and Ms. Othman, and fled with the child.

The suspect strangled the child the following day, and buried him in a farm in Madaba, the charge sheet said.

The court tribunal, headed by Judge Mohammad Ajarmeh and including Judges Mifleh Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan, postponed the case to Dec. 27 to hear the last defence witness in the case.

Also Monday, the court heard three witness in the trial of two men accused of the double murder of two Saudi nationals in Ghamadan Park in July 1996.

Usama Ahmad and Mohammad Saleh, both 25, are being tried by the Criminal Court on charges of the premeditated murder of Sa'eed Erwei and his son Jamal on July 12.

The two, who also face charges of theft, possessing an unlicensed gun, and destroying official documents, stole the victims' Mercedes 280, and changed its Saudi licence plates.

Testifying for the prosecution, Second Lt. Mu'ath Ahmad told the court that upon searching the house of the first defendant Usama Ahmad, he "found a briefcase that belonged to the victims."

A second witness, Shaher Abdul Fattah, 26, who owned a car accessories shop, said the second defendant, Mohammad, visited his shop in July 1996 and asked him to manufacture a plastic Jordanian licence plate.

Hussein Kamal, 37, a mechanic, stated that Mr. Ahmad brought him a Mercedes 280 and asked him to change the vehicle's automatic transmission to manual.

"I changed the car's transmission, and later when the police showed me a picture of the car, I was able to recognise it as the same vehicle that I did the job on," he told the court.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the two headed to the park with the intent to rob and kill any person they saw.

The sheet said Mr. Ahmad drew his gun and shot both men while they slept next to the car, robbed them of their wallets, and fled the scene with their car. The automobile was seized by the authorities two months later, after the defendants failed to provide the police with the appropriate car registration.

The court adjourned the session to Dec. 28 to hear more prosecution witnesses.

In another trial Monday, the same tribunal sentenced a 37-year-old man to a five-year imprisonment term with hard labour after he was found guilty of raping a Sri Lankan domestic servant in Amman.

Hamed Hassan was first sentenced to 10-years imprisonment, which was reduced by half because the victim dropped the charges against him.

The verdict will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PIANO RECITAL

* Piano recital by Anna Ma'ali at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

FILM

* "Mrs. Doubtfire" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

LECTURE

"The Strangest Plant in the World! Natural History and Ethnobotany of the Hydnoraceae" by Dr. Lytton Musselman at the Binational Fulbright Commission in Jordan at 4:00 p.m. (Tel. 684-760).

EXHIBITIONS

* Display of Bani Hamida handicrafts (rugs, cushions, and wall hangings) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696/7), until Jan. 5.
* Modern Bulgarian Art" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Jan. 5.
* Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).
* Paintings by Samia Zaru at Amman Bookshop, Jabal Amman, Third Circle, until Dec. 24.
* Exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Rashid Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

Civil defence approves emergency measures

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Committee for the Amman governorate Monday discussed and endorsed a number of measures to deal with emergencies resulting from possible severe weather conditions this winter.

Mohammad Hadid, assistant governor of the Amman region, said it was agreed that the Amman Municipality should create several emergency teams equipped with the necessary machinery to deal with collapsed buildings, flooded homes and other buildings, and other situations.

The participants in the meeting agreed that the Health Department in Amman will ensure that all public hospitals remain ready to deal with emergencies by guaranteeing around the clock service by doctors and health workers, sufficient medical supplies, and ambulances whenever needed, said Mr. Hadid, who chaired the meeting.

The Department of Social Development will ensure sufficient food supplies, blankets, and tents to relieve victims of natural disasters and coordinate work with voluntary and charitable organisations to provide emergency assistance.

The Department of Public Works, the telecommunications authorities, and the water authority will open public schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to serve as evacuation centres under severe weather conditions, open roads that might be blocked by snow or landslides, and restore electric power promptly, among other measures.

Clinton brings holiday cheer to Bosnia

SARAJEVO (AFP) — President Bill Clinton brought Christmas comfort to fog-bound Sarajevo Monday, rallying U.S. troops whose mission here he has just extended and urging war-weary Bosnians to seize the chance for peace.

"Only little more than two years ago, men, women and children ran the gauntlet of snipers and shells in a desperate search for water," Mr. Clinton said in a solemn address in the ornate National Theatre.

"Now they walk in security to work and school," he said in praise of the 31,000-member NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR).

The president's visit came on the heels of his decision to extend the U.S. contingent here for the second time and to set no withdrawal deadlines as he did with SFOR and its predecessor, IFOR.

Mr. Clinton earlier met the three Bosnian leaders, Muslim Alija Izetbegovic, Serb Momcilo Krajisnik and Croat Kresimir Zubak and he challenged them to ensure a permanent truce.

"You have pledged to isolate and arrest indicted war criminals — now you must follow through on that commitment both for the sake of justice and in the service of lasting peace," he said.

While dignitaries heard Mr. Clinton's address at the National Theatre, crowds gathered outside in hopes of catching a glimpse of the U.S. leader despite the usual draconian security surrounding a presidential trip.

"We are here because we love him. His name symbolises the end of the war. He is a friend of Bosnia," a well-dressed woman in the crowd said.

Others here had a more cynical view of the multinational force, which has been criticised for failing to arrest war criminals.

"What FOR?!" read badges made by a local group to resemble the official IFOR and SFOR emblems. Mr. Clinton and his wife Hillary, who arrived in a red cape for the holiday visit, brought $1million in telephone cards for the troops to make Christmas calls, supplies for a local school along with words of hope for the battle-scarred city.

"You have seen what war has wrought. Now you know what peace can bring, so seize the chance before you," said Mr. Clinton, who asked a group of youths he met at a coffee shop what they wanted most from America.

"Stay a while longer," Mr. Clinton said they told him, adding that three U.S. soldiers also gave him support for the extended mission.

The president had planned a pre-dawn stop at the Aviano Air Force base in Italy but was diverted by bad weather.

Dense grey fog also greeted him in Bosnia but the city gave the Clintons, who brought their daughter Chelsea along, a warm reception.

"It's moral support," said 19-year-old Ajla Cico, who fled the city in 1994 through a tunnel dug under the Sarajevo airport and received refugee status in the United States.

"We are glad he is here because it is support for us to continue our lives, rebuild the city," said Mr. Cico, who was back home for a visit.

After his address, Mr. Clinton was to fly to Tuzla to dine in the U.S. base mess hall with troops and then on to Aviano before heading home to Washington.

Along with the gifts and glowing words, Mr. Clinton brought along a number of congressional heavyweights as leverage against the Republican lawmakers who oppose the extended U.S. deployment.

Former Senate Republican leader Bob Dole — Mr. Clinton's 1996 White House challenger — was also on board to show his support for the president's Bosnia policy.

About 8,000 U.S. troops are here to help enforce the Dayton Peace Accords, which ended more than three years of ethnic warfare between Muslims, Serbs and Croats in Bosnia.

By next June, Washington is expected to have spent some $7.1 billion on its military deployment in the troubled Balkan country.

U.S. President Bill Clinton chats with his Bosnian counterpart Alija Izetbegovic (second right) as Momcilo Krajisnik (left) and Kresimir Zubak (right), a Serb and a Croat members of the Bosnian Presidency, walk with them before their meeting in Sarajevo (Reuter photo)

Cambodian ceasefire rejected, new fighting erupts

PHNOM PENH (R) — Top Cambodian officials Monday rejected a ceasefire call by opposition figure Sam Rainsy as heavy factional fighting flared in a hotly contested town in the north.

Forces loyal to ousted co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh said they had been under heavy attack from government soldiers Monday.

Earlier co-Minister of Defence General Tea Banh rejected an announcement by Sam Rainsy made two days ago that warring factions, including co-Premier Hun Sen's government, were ready to agree to a truce.

"Don't believe Sam Rainsy, he is inconsequential," Gen. Tea Banh told Reuters.

Hun Sen's spokesman, Om Yentieng, also said Hun Sen had not agreed to any ceasefire.

In a statement Monday, Sam Rainsy repeated his calls for a one-month ceasefire which he said should start on Dec. 31 with United Nations support.

Fighting has flared repeatedly in Cambodia's north and west since Hun Sen ousted his former coalition government partner Ranariddh, on July 6.

Last week, troops under Hun Sen's control launched a fresh offensive on the abandoned border trade town of O'Smach, where forces loyal to Mr. Ranariddh are fighting alongside Khmer Rouge guerrillas near Thai territory.

Monday, forces loyal to the prince said the government had launched another offensive.

"The resistance area is under heavy attack from Hun Sen's soldiers," they said in a statement, adding that they were "bombarded" by "heavy artillery but suffered no casualties."

Earlier Monday General Tea Banh said it was the opposition, not the government, who were the aggressors in the conflict.

"We are staying in our bases and the anarchic forces are attacking us. If we don't protect ourselves, they will come to cut our throats," he said.

Also Monday, a group of Cambodian politicians who fled abroad in the wake of Hun Sen's coup said they would not return because of continued fighting.

The union of Cambodian democrats, which includes loyalists of Prince Ranariddh and his ally Sam Rainsy, said in a statement from Bangkok that some parliamentarians who fled Phnom Penh had considered returning after an advance team from the group visited Cambodia earlier this month.

"But during the past few days... Hun Sen has created obstacles to our return plan by sending troops to savagely fight and kill the royal armed forces," the statement said.

"The members of parliament who are living in exile wish to solemnly declare that we have decided to postpone our united return to Cambodia as a protest to Second Prime Minister Hun Sen that we abhor and cannot cooperate with," it added.

Prince Ranariddh, however, plans to return to his homeland on Jan. 15, a top aide said, but government officials said he would face arrest on arrival in Phnom Penh.

Prince Ranariddh, who has been out of the country since the eve of his ouster, will return to prepare for next year's elections, said the prince's special representative, Lu Laysreng.

A Thai army officer at the border told Reuters by telephone Thai authorities were expecting a flare-up at any time because Cambodian government forces were seen bringing in reinforcements Sunday.

"We expect fighting to resume soon, probably heavy fighting," the Thai officer said.

He said Thai surveillance units on a hilltop at the border spotted six truckloads of government troops and several loads of ammunition being moved into the area after nightfall Sunday.

Cuban weekly launches campaign against 'gringos'

HAVANA (AFP) — A Cuban Communist youth weekly Sunday called on Cubans to voice loathing for the United States, leading by example with a list of 70 reasons to hate "the gringos."

U.S. cultural sensibilities — or lack thereof — get skewered with such barbs as "if they go to Europe, they first visit EuroDisney, then McDonald's," and "they think Arnold Schwarzenegger is an excellent actor."

"When they go abroad," the weekly says of U.S. tourists, "they wear shorts and Hawaiian shirts — even in Finland," and while "they consume crack, heroin and cocaine, they cannot drink the water in Mexico."

Juventud Rebelde, the official publication of Cuba's Communist Youth movement, not only released its list of colourful anti-U.S. aphorisms but also called on readers to send in their own on a cut-out coupon.

The weekly waxed indignant over U.S. political ignorance, saying that "even though (U.S. citizens) are immersed in a capitalist and consumerist society, they don't know who (Karl) Marx was."

U.S. society's past and present ills — racism, violence, drug use, the government's treatment of Native Americans — each rate at least one bitter-edged quip.

Idealism in Washington's foreign policy? "They fight for 'democracy' only where there is oil," the paper said. The U.S. embargo on Cuba and the Helms-Burton law that aims to tighten it are also targets.

The weekly's vitriolic list includes references to the victims of U.S. nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as victims of napalm bombs, which were used extensively during the Vietnam war.

The tirade ends with an angry jab at U.S. regional influence: "Despite all of this, they are still able to control us."

Colombian peasants flee alleged paramilitary violence

BOGOTA (AFP) — Hundreds of peasants continued their panicked exodus from northeastern Colombia Sunday, following reports that right-wing paramilitary groups have slaughtered dozens of people in the region.

Refugees began arriving Monday in the village of Pavarando. Regional officials said they were bracing for the town's population to swell from fewer than 1,000 to 5,000.

Rescue workers with the Red Cross said entire families have been arriving in Pavarando, braving harsh tropical conditions in Colombia's jungles to reach the village.

Local residents interviewed by humanitarian workers reported that as many as 40 peasants had been assassinated by right-wing extremists, although government officials said they were unable to confirm that report.

The paramilitaries allegedly attacked the peasants because they were presumed to be supporters of left-wing guerrillas in the region.

The reported attack would be the latest in a continuing pattern of rural violence in northeastern Colombia over the past two years. Hundreds of thousands of peasants have been driven from their homes as paramilitary activity increased in the region.

Earlier this year, numerous skirmishes in the area between the army, leftist guerrillas and the paramilitaries prompted a mass exodus of some 10,000 people. Many crossed the border and fled into Panama.

Sunday, Alvaro Uribe, governor of the state of Antioquia, where Pavarando is located, refuted the allegations of a paramilitary attack.

Mr. Uribe said army troops were unable to corroborate reports of violent clashes between leftist guerrillas and paramilitaries, saying only one corpse had been found in the area.

Peasants insisted an attack had occurred and said government accounts cannot be trusted. They are especially suspicious of the military.

The army has been accused in the past of colluding with the right-wing paramilitaries to wipe out to eradicate the Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the pro-Cuban National Liberation Army (ELN).

Paramilitary groups are believed to be responsible for most of the 70 or so massacres that have taken place in Colombia over the past year.

In the wake of the killings, Colombia's President Ernesto Samper has announced a crackdown on paramilitary groups and offered a $1 million reward for information leading to the capture of the leaders of such groups.

Meanwhile, paramilitary leader Carlos Castano reiterated his threat against the guerrillas in an interview with the independent magazine Cambio 16.

"We've reached the point where the armed forces are not capable of wiping out the guerrillas," said Mr. Castano.

Military crisis in Peru eases as generals return to barracks

LIMA (AP) — A battle for public laurels between President Alberto Fujimori and Peru's top general that had escalated into a tense conflict appeared to ease Sunday when regional military leaders left Lima to return to their barracks.

Mr. Fujimori Saturday ordered the generals back to their command posts after the six chiefs of Peru's military regions held a surprise meeting with armed forces head Gen. Nicolas Hermoza in Lima. The generals had remained in the capital following a military ceremony Friday.

Radio reports said the generals began returning to their bases across Peru in the morning, and the armed forces Sunday afternoon sent a letter signed by Gen. Hermoza to the government saying they had obeyed the president's order.

The powerful armed forces have been one of Mr. Fujimori's main support bases since he took power in 1990, and the growing rift between Mr. Fujimori and its leaders has produced fears of political instability.

The conflict between Mr. Fujimori and Gen. Hermoza, a longtime government supporter, started as a public battle to take credit for the April operation that freed hostages from the Japanese embassy, where they had been taken captive by Tupac Amaru guerrillas during a reception on Dec. 17, 1996.

In a newspaper interview published Wednesday, the anniversary of the rebels' raid on the embassy, Mr. Fujimori was quoted as saying Gen. Hermoza had played no role in planning the rescue.

Gen. Hermoza had claimed in a book he wrote about the rescue that he was in charge of planning and executing the April 22 operation that freed 72 hostages.

The rescue left the 14 rebels, two commandos and one hostage dead.

Mr. Fujimori had also said recently that he was considering removing Gen. Hermoza from his post, which he has held for six years.

Neither Mr. Fujimori nor Gen. Hermoza has commented publicly on the dispute.

At a military ceremony Friday, top military and police leaders closed ranks behind Gen. Hermoza, expressing anger at attempts to discredit his participation in the rescue.

Opposition and pro-Fujimori forces rallied around the president and called on Gen. Hermoza and his allies to respect Peru's democratic order.

Gustavo Mohme, the director of Peru's leading opposition newspaper, La Republica, said the military leaders' support for Gen. Hermoza escalated what had been a personal dispute.

"The regional military commanders support for Gen. Hermoza Friday dangerously transformed the problem into an institutional crisis," he said.

However, Mr. Fujimori has the support of Vladimiro Montesinos, the de facto head of military intelligence. Mr. Montesinos has placed officers loyal to him in key positions in the military hierarchy.

"What is happening now is a power struggle between Gen. Hermoza, who wants to stay in power, and Vladimiro Montesinos," said opposition congressman Fernando Olivera.

Communist ally of government wants U.S. bases out of Italy

ROME (AP) — The Communist Party which gives crucial parliamentary support to Premier Romano Prodi's coalition is pressing for the closure of U.S. military bases in Italy.

Armando Cossuta, president of Communist Refoundation, in an interview Monday in La Stampa, a Turin daily, called for parliamentary debate on the matter.

The Communist Party is outside Mr. Prodi's centre-left Olive Tree coalition but gives the government the majority it needs in the lower chamber of deputies. Mr. Prodi's coalition has a majority in the senate.

The interview was published on the day that U.S. President Bill Clinton flew to Bosnia to visit with U.S. peacekeeping troops. Mr. Clinton was due to stop over at a U.S. base in northeast Italy, Aviano, on his way back from Bosnia.

"Today the president of the United States, Bill Clinton, lands with his plane in Italy but not on Italian soil," Mr. Cossutta told the interviewer. The accords regulating the bases' presence mean that "you're dealing with U.S. territory, where U.S. laws rule, not Italian. It's a paradoxical, absurd situation which must be fixed."

Asked if his party wanted new rules to govern the base agreements, Mr. Cossuta Replied: "We think that these bases ought to go."

"Hypothesised — but not necessarily true — that in the past there were possible dangers from the East, all that today doesn't exist any more," Mr. Cossutta said.

Among the bases supporting U.S. forces in Italy is Signonella, Sicily, the launching point for U.S. navy planes staging reconnaissance missions over Bosnia for NATO.

Mr. Cossutta was asked how his party's stand on the bases could work, given the close U.S.-Italian alliance.

"The point is a country like ours can't be a limited sovereignty, because we could find ourselves with the enemy in our house, with his positions on our territory," Mr. Cossutta said.

The Communist leader also called the presence of NATO bases in Italy after the end of the cold war "anachronistic" and said security plans should come under the auspices of the United Nations.

Mr. Cossutta's call for base closings was echoed by Communist Refoundation's top leader, Party Secretary Fausto Bertinotti, as he entered the premier's office Monday morning for a coalition strategy session on domestic issues such as budgetary matters.

The bases' future hasn't been in the news in Italy for years, and there was no indication the coalition would discuss it.

"We're for dissolving NATO because there's no reason, if there ever was one, for this military alliance to exist. We're in favour of the national territory gaining back its sovereignty and thus the American bases must go," Mr. Bertinotti told reporters.

Russia's cargo craft docks with Mir

MOSCOW (R) — Russian unmanned Progress M-37 cargo ship successfully docked with the Mir orbiting station Monday, a mission control spokeswoman said.

"The docking took place at 1.22 p.m. Moscow time (1022 GMT) in automatic regime," the spokeswoman said.

It delivered equipment, food and New Year presents for the Russian-American crew as well as additional insulation for Mir's leaky hatch that cosmonauts use for space sorties, she said.

The Progress M-37 was launched Saturday from the Baikonur cosmodrome that Russia rents from Kazakhstan.

"After checking docking systems the cosmonauts plan to start unloading the cargo craft," the spokeswoman added.

The crew discovered the hatch was not hermetically sealed after a spacewalk on Nov. 3. They were then forced to pump air into the airlock where the hatch is located.

The previous Progress, an M-36, undocked from Mir last week and burned up in the earth's atmosphere.

Before its mission was over a German-made Inspector flying camera was launched from the Progress about 500 metres away from Mir. The camera failed to respond to commands and the Mir, seeking to reduce chances of a mid-air collision, had to manoeuvre away from Inspector.

French minister calls for calm in troubled suburbs

LYON, France (R) — French Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement appealed for calm Sunday after days of unrest in two French suburbs in protest against the police killings of two young men.

Mr. Chevenement strongly condemned a policeman who shot dead a man in his custody in Lyon Thursday but urged the public not to generalise about all police.

"I would like to issue a call for calm," Mr. Chevenement told France INFO radio. "These dramas must not be exploited. It's time for justice to do its work.

"One shouldn't say all police are murderers just because one has committed a murder," he went on, quickly adding that a court would have to make the final judgement on the officer in question.

There was only scattered overnight violence in the two suburbs, La Duchere outside Lyon and Dammerie-les-Lys near Paris, after days of unrest that left dozens of cars torched and several riot police injured by stonethrowers.

In the second killing last week, police shot in the head a 16-year-old driver without a license who raced through one roadblock and tried to crash through another.

"This was unfortunately the continuation of urban violence that has been going on for several years now," he said of the death of Abdelkader Bouziane Wednesday.

Speaking of the Lyon shooting, in which Fabrice Fernandez was killed with his own shotgun, Mr. Chevenement said it was totally unacceptable for a policeman to handle a gun without knowing if it was loaded or not.

"Nobody can count on the interior minister to cover such a mishap," he said.

The officer in question was being investigated for murder, a rare charge against a policeman on duty, and risks a sentence of 30 years in jail if convicted.

Originally explained as a accident, the death of Fernandez, an unemployed father of three, looked more suspicious the more officials looked into it, judicial sources said. The accused policeman had twice been sanctioned for unprofessional conduct in the past.

Alain Pappalardo, a half-brother of Fernandez detained with him, said he saw the victim's blood-covered face and heard officers in the police station boasting right after the killing.

"They said, 'we shot him in the head'," he told LCI television. Relatives of Fernandez called for a silent protest march Monday.

Fernandez was in custody as a suspect because police found him carrying the gun after hearing shots following the theft of a dog in the neighbourhood.

Although unrelated, the incidents were part of a recent wave of violence in poorer neighbourhoods around large French cities in which bored unemployed youths have attacked police and public transport.

Almost 30 vehicles were firebombed and six police and firemen injured in violent protests in La Duchere Friday evening.

Take off those bowler hats, Blair tells Britons

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister Tony Blair has told Newsweek magazine he wants Britain to shed its image of "bowler hats and umbrellas all marching down Whitehall" in favour of being creative and dynamic.

Mr. Blair, picked as the U.S. news magazine's European of the year, was asked about the popularity of the British film "The Full Monty" about unemployed men making money as strippers:

Did this say something about the "new Britain", Newsweek's interviewers wanted to know.

Mr. Blair admitted he had*n't seen the film but said its* success indicated "a great sense of confidence and adventure and a greater sense of comfort with ourselves."

Britain was discovering it was good at being "inventive, creative, dynamic and outward-looking," he explained.

"It's not about saying 'what Britain's about is living in the world of a hundred years ago, when guys wore bowler hats and umbrellas, all marching down Whitehall'," London's government district.

In the interview Mr. Blair described his close political friend Bill Clinton as "a really magnificent performer."

He also acknowledged that his meeting this month with Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA's political wing Sinn *Fein*, "will have distressed many people."

Asked whether Britain's European partners saw him as an "Anglo-American Trojan horse", Mr. Blair replied:

"Whenever that's raised with me in Europe I go straight on the attack and say: 'I plead absolutely guilty to wanting a strong deep relationship between the United *States and Europe, because* that's in the interests of both'."

On his own domestic political problems, Mr. Blair predicted: "It'll get a lot rougher than this. I've always said this to people, if we don't hit rough times, we're not doing our job properly.

"If what you do is sort of amble along and hope you don't offend anyone, then you're going to get to the end of your period of time and you'll have done nothing."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin looks on during his meeting with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin (not pictured) at the Barvikha sanatorium outside Moscow (Reuter photo)

Yeltsin to return to work Tuesday after cold

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has fully recovered from a chest infection and will return to his Kremlin office Tuesday, a presidential spokeswoman said Monday.

"Tomorrow I'm going back to the Kremlin and to work. There are no traces of the illness left," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying before meeting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The Kremlin spokeswoman confirmed the agency report.

Mr. Yeltsin has been recovering from a cold and viral infection since Dec. 10 at the Barvikha sanatorium outside Moscow.

The president, who had major heart bypass surgery in November, 1996, underwent routine cardiac checks Friday. Doctors said his heart was working normally and had not been affected by the cold and viral infection.

Last Thursday, Mr. Yeltsin said he intended to return to work Friday but doctors urged him to stay at the sanatorium for several more days.

His spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, said Sunday the president was considering starting a holiday shortly or early in 1998 but had not made a final decision.

Monday, Mr. Yeltsin said he and Mr. Chernomyrdin had a lot of work to do. "Viktor Chernomyrdin and I have many issues to discuss." Russian news agencies quoted him as saying. They did not elaborate.

Loyalist party leader calls for end to concessions outside North Ireland peace talks

DUBLIN (AFP) — The Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) will not return to the Northern Ireland peace talks in the New Year unless the "sanctity" of the process is restored and the "shutter pulled down in concessions" outside the talks, the leader of the party said Monday.

David Ervine said he expected a meeting with Northern Ireland Secretary Dr. Mo Mowlam Monday would probably *be futile. "My guess is we* will be out in January."

"Our experience in such meetings where the government attempted crisis management has been rather woeful. We'll go through with the meeting and see where it takes us and early in the New Year I would hope we will have a meeting with the Irish government as well."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair met his Irish counterpart Bertie Ahern Sunday for talks centring on the release of loyalist prisoners.

Recent pardons from Dublin of nine Irish *Republican Army (IRA)* prisoners triggered loyalist anger, particularly from the PUP, which is linked to the main loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Volunteer Force.

He said he had warned twice that his party was being excluded. He described the republican prisoner release without consultation as an "Exocet fired into his constituency."

"There should have been discussion and deliberation. I am not complaining per se about the releases. But I do accept that there is a serious perception within the *Unionist community* that the IRA are being given sweeties for their price for being in the negotiations," he told RTE radio.

Trusted ally set to take over from Milosevic

BELGRADE (AFP) — Milan Milutinovic, 55, was elected Sunday as new president of Serbia to succeed the republic's longtime strongman Slobodan Milosevic of whom he is a close ally.

Mr. Milutinovic, until now the foreign minister of federal Yugoslavia, was backed by the ruling ex-Communist Socialist Party *(SPS)* which announced early Monday that he had won.

SPS spokesman Ivica Dacic said Mr. Milutinovic had garnered 2,185,218 votes or 59.68 per cent of the vote against 1,363,577 (37.24 per cent) for his hardline nationalist rival Vojislav Seselj of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS).

"Milan Milutinovic is the new president of Serbia," he said.

Mr. Dacic said turnout in Sunday's run-off stood at 50.52 per cent after results from 98 per cent of the 9,844 polling centres had been counted. However *this figure was challenged* by the SRS and was higher than an earlier estimate by the non-governmental Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID).

Turnout had to be at least 50 per cent for the poll to be valid.

"It is a great day for us all. We must now get down to work," Mr. Milutinovic said on television while SPS members drank champagne to celebrate.

The SRS challenged Mr. Milutinovic's victory saying turnout was only 49.12 per cent.

"It is obvious that the victory of Mr. Milutinovic was arranged in advance," said Dragan Todorovic, Mr. Seselj's campaign manager.

He said the Socialists were guilty of "unprecedented robbery" claiming they had stuffed ballot boxes by attributing fictitious votes to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo where the Albanian majority boycotted the poll.

The electoral commission was not expected to publish any results before Monday afternoon. It has until Thursday to issue the final results.

About 30 experts from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe who monitored the poll are due to issue a first report Monday.

Victory for Mr. Milutinovic came after four *rounds of voting in three* months. A first two-round election failed to yield a winner in October because turnout was too low.

Analysts said that with their candidate's victory, the Socialists had achieved their main goal which was to knock down Mr. Seselj and his ultra-nationalists.

"Fascism will never win in Serbia," Mr. Milutinovic proclaimed during the campaign, branding Mr. Seselj a "warmonger" and warning that "the world will never accept extreme-right forces" in Serbia.

As president of Serbia, Mr. Milutinovic will sit on the supreme defence council alongside Mr. Milosevic and the new president of Montenegro Milo Djukanovic whose victory over Mr. Milosevic's favourite Momir Bulatovic, Belgrade still contests.

Mr. Milutinovic has always given unstinting support to Mr. Milosevic who ruled Serbia with an iron hand for seven years before stepping down in July to take over the presidency of the rump Yugoslavia. However, Mr. Milutinovic said he would "cooperate with Milo Djukanovic" a reformer who last week accused Mr. Milosevic of seeking to "rule single handedly."

During the campaign, Mr. Milutinovic criticised what he called attempts by the *international community to* meddle "in Serbia's internal affairs", notably over its restive Albanian-majority province of Kosovo.

Mr. Milutinovic also defended the theory that Western pressure on Belgrade has helped to foster support for the extreme right and for Mr. Seselj.

If people voted en masse for Mr. Seselj, it was because the West had failed to appreciate the "peace policy" of Mr. Milosevic, he argued.

Mr. Milutinovic has promised to take Yugoslavia back into international institutions but he said Belgrade would not agree to any "abusive interpretation" of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia.

"*Yugoslavia is not com*mitted by the Dayton accords to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal" in the Hague which was set up to try war-crimes suspects in the former Yugoslavia, he said.

"Any falsification of the Dayton accords could jeopardise the peace process and lead to renewed fighting and new destruction," he warned recently.

Mr. Milutinovic has been foreign minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia since August 1995 and first came to prominence in November 1995 when he took part in the Dayton *negotiations which led to* the accords which ended three and a half years of war in Bosnia.

He was born on Dec. 19, 1942, in Belgrade and began his political career in the Communist Youth movement. He went on to join the Yugoslav League of Communists which in 1990 reformed itself into the Socialist Party (SPS).

Nigeria silent over fate of coup plot suspects

LAGOS (AFP) — The Nigerian defence headquarters Monday maintained a complete silence over the fate of the suspects arrested at the weekend over an alleged coup plot.

Defence spokesman Colonel Godwin Ugbo told AFP that he had no new information to offer beyond the announcement late Sunday by the defence chief of staff that 11 military men and one civilian had been arrested in connection with the alleged plot to overthrow the junta led by General Sani Abacha.

Col. Ugbo said new information might be available Tuesday.

The arrests included Gen. Abacha's deputy, General Oladipo Diya, 53, as well as two other serving generals, who were ministers in the Federal Executive Council, dissolved last month.

When the council was reconstituted last week Monday, the two generals — Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju — were not part of the lineup.

Unconfirmed sources here said that more soldiers were arrested overnight.

Another alleged coup plot was uncovered in March 1995. More than 40 soldiers and civilians, including former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo, are currently serving various jail terms after being convicted in camera by a military tribunal for plotting to overthrow Gen. Abacha.

India's Hindu nationalists firm up new alliances in bid to seize power

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's Hindu nationalists are firming up crucial regional alliances in a strategic move to try and win power in the world's largest democracy, analysts said Monday.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) *ended a three-day leadership* meeting in the eastern city of Bhubaneshwar late Sunday determined to win national polls scheduled in February or March.

The BJP wants to avoid a repetition of the post-election scenario of 1996 when it formed its first government in New Delhi but was toppled 13 days later after failing to muster a parliamentary majority.

BJP leaders say the party — reputedly the best organised in India with a nationwide membership running into millions — is set on taking office this time.

"Now we are doubly sure that we will have a comfortable majority in parliament," said party ideologue Jana Krishnamurthy.

Mr. Krishnamurthy played a *pivotal role in the BJP's* newly-announced alliance with the AIADMK party, a key regional group in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The agreement ended the AIADMK's traditional link with the Congress party. Also last week, the BJP allied itself with a breakaway faction of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's Janata Dal (People's Party) in the eastern state of Orissa.

Those developments have given the Hindu nationalists *much-needed credibility* in the south and east, two populous regions where the BJP traditionally has been weak.

Mr. Krishnamurthy told AFP: "There is also a likelihood of our reaching an understanding with other regional parties elsewhere in the country.

"This is on top of the four regional alliances we already have."

BJP's shadow Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said Sunday his party was charting "a new chapter" in India's turbulent politics by entering into alliances with regional groupings.

The BJP finished the single largest party following the April-May 1996 elections, winning 162 out of parliament's 545 seats.

Along with four allies, it had *nearly 200 seats and formed a* short-lived coalition. The Congress party, which was ousted last year, then quickly propped up Mr. Gujral's United Front coalition in power.

This time the BJP is confident of nearing the half-way mark — although its opponents dismiss the possibility.

"The BJP's claims are nothing but claims," said A.B. Bardhan, general secretary of the Communist Party of India. "The BJP has been claiming before every election that it *will form a stable government.*"

Most analysts expect the new polls to result in another hung parliament, although the BJP could finish as the biggest party. Its two chief contenders are the centre-left United Front and the Congress, which is in decline after ruling India for almost four centuries.

BJP supporters, however, admit that in the process of entering into a series of new alliances, the Hindu nationalists have lost the aura of a principled party that would not barter with its rivals.

Many of the party's new friends are men with a criminal past — candidates who were once shunned by the BJP but who have the clout to give it crucial votes in many constituencies.

But BJP's Vajpayee argues all is fair in politics.

"For 40 years we played the game according to the rules," he said. But we face adversaries who play foul. There should a level-playing field."

Indonesian officials say they did not find plane fuselage, as believed

MAKARTI JAYA, Indonesia (AP) — With flowers, rosary beads and Chinese incense sticks, relatives aboard boats bade farewell Sunday to loved ones who died when a Singapore-owned jetliner plowed *into a muddy river.*

"Goodbye, goodbye," cried out an elderly Singaporean couple who travelled to the site where a SilkAir Boeing 737 crashed Friday on the island of Sumatra, all 104 people on board, including their daughter, are believed dead.

In a setback to the search for victims, a rescue commander said divers who believed they had found a mostly intact piece of fuselage instead had found a pile of plane pieces on a murky riverbed.

Hampered by swift currents and poor visibility, rescue crews earlier had said they found the bulk of the wreckage of flight MI-185, which plunged into the Musi River. The plane was heading from Jakarta to Singapore.

Police and navy teams, aided by local fishermen casting nets, have recovered human remains, luggage and passports. But divers who thought they were groping fuselage doors *on the river bed were* apparently mistaken.

"Yesterday we thought we had found a large piece of the plane intact and had hoped that the bodies were *inside,*" said Brig. Gen. Ryamizard, deputy military commander in the district, he said, however, that divers found only pieces Sunday.

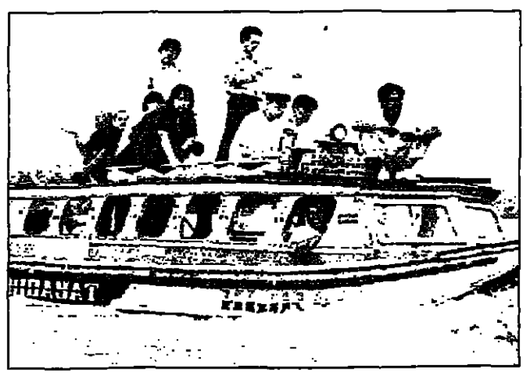
A platform with two cranes lay on the river, ready for hoisting wreckage from the river bed. But rescuers were reassessing their plans after realising they had not located the fuselage.

"The search today was in fact fruitless," Transport Minister Haryanto Dhanutirto said Sunday. "Now we have to recheck with witnesses to find out the exact location of where the plane went into the water."

Rescuers in speedboats pulled one body, a child, from the fast-flowing river, which has swollen to 450 meters wide due to monsoon rains. The body was so badly decomposed that neither gender nor identity could be determined.

A Singapore navy boat arrived to help in the search, and an Indonesian navy minesweeper carrying sonar equipment was expected to reach the site Monday.

SilkAir planned to fly in forensic experts to help identify victims, said airline representative Manjit Singh Grewal.



Grieving relatives pray and throw ghost money in Sumatra's Musi River where a Singapore's SilkAir airliner crashed Friday (Reuter photo)

After flying in more than 200 relatives from Singapore, SilkAir arranged boats to take the two-hour trip from the town of Palembang to the crash site. The airline also supplied flowers, candles, rosary beads and incense sticks for prayer services.

Led by a clergyman, 10 relatives of crash victims sang a Christian hymn on a boat near where the plane went down. Their voices broke and some wept openly.

Several dozen brightly coloured boats carrying hun*dreds of sightseers from* Palembang bobbed about as rescue teams worked.

Oetoyo Diran, the Indonesian head of the crash investigation, *said the priority was to* recover the plane's flight data and voice recorders, which could shed light on the cause of the crash.

He said investigators were trying to map where they find each piece of wreckage, hoping that will lead to the location of the recorders.

In most jetliners, the recorders are stored in the tail.

Russian tank unit comes under attack near Chechenya

MOSCOW (R) — A group of heavily armed men attacked a Russian tank battalion stationed near the rebel region of Chechenya during the night, *officials said Monday.*

A police duty officer in Dagestan's capital Makhachkala said two soldiers had been injured in the attack *and one was missing.*

He said two of the attackers had been captured. The rest of the group, numbering around 15, then seized a bus full of *civilians, mainly women, they* let them go but kept two policemen and two civilians as human shields.

"Now the terrorists are not far from the village of Almak, in the Kazbekovsky region on the border with Chechenya," the spokesman said, adding that they were surrounded by Russian troops.

Russian news agencies said earlier that two combat tanks had been burned in the attack on the unit, which was stationed near the town of Buinaksk in Russia's region of Dagestan, and four local policemen had been abducted.

The attackers used assault rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers in the battle, *which lasted about two hours* until 4.30 a.m. (0130 GMT), they said.

Interfax news agency quoted the Magomed Tolboyev, secretary of *Dagestan's* security council, as saying the group had broken through the border into Chechenya. He also said a civilian had been killed when the gunmen seized his car.

A defence ministry spokesman in Moscow confirmed the attack on the tank battalion but had no details.

Buinaksk was left without electricity supplies and telephone communications as a result of the attack, the agencies said.

Russian troops fought a 21-month war against Chechen separatists and withdrew in humiliation after an accord signed in August 1996 under which the rebels agreed to postpone a decision on the region's *future* political status by five years.

Tensions grew in and around Chechenya last week, raising doubts over planned visit of Russian President Boris Yeltsin to the region. Mr. Yeltsin, who in 1994 sent tanks to try to crush Chechenya's separatist drive, is expected to visit the largely Muslim republic next month.

Chechenya's President Aslan Maskhadov said last week he would meet Mr. Yeltsin only to discuss the republic's full sovereignty.

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Return to conflict

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benyamin Netanyahu dropped another bombshell this week when he declared that all the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, no matter how small or insignificant, will always be off-limits to the Palestinians and stay under Israel's jurisdiction at all times. On Monday Netanyahu and all his cabinet ministers toured the West Bank to determine for themselves what part of the occupied lands they would relinquish to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as if the West Bank was their own property and they could slice it as they saw fit. The irony about such exercises by this Israeli government is the fact that it conducts itself with little, if any, concern for Palestinian rights and international legality.

Israel's narrow security needs and myopic political vision by its leaders appear to be the only criteria for deciding the final status of the Palestinian territories. Whether the Israeli cabinet opts for Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai's so-called minimalist plan or Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon's maximalist scheme, all what the Palestinians seem to be destined to end up with is between one-third to half of the West Bank.

No wonder the Palestinian side is contemplating changing their bargaining position altogether and is now threatening to go back to and demand the implementation of the 1947 U.N. partition plan that gave them half of Palestine.

In fact the partition plan is the most legitimate basis for the resolution of the Palestine question since it was the basis on which Israel itself came into being and received international recognition. As long as the Likud Party and its coalition partners in the government in Israel believe in the West Bank being part of "Eretz Israel," there should be no moral scruples about Palestinian demands for their full rights in Palestine.

It seems to us that the full and faithful implementation of the Oslo accords affords the only viable way out of the mess that Prime Minister Netanyahu is creating for himself and everybody around him. The sooner that he goes back to the Oslo agreements, the better for everyone concerned. Destroying those accords would take us all to a new round of conflict.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan Monday urged the government to interfere and stem the rising prices of all goods and services which he described as intolerable. Hassan said that in preparing the 1998 fiscal budget the government should make allocations for increasing employees' salaries to help them meet price hikes in food, medical services and various commodities. It is regrettable, he said, that members of Parliament during their debate on a vote of confidence in the government failed to bring up this important question, and the government failed to provide figures for the rise in the cost of living index. Hassan said the price of some of the basic commodities like vegetables and fruits rose by 100 per cent, and the limited income groups are left to bear the brunt, he said. Furthermore the Ministry of Health and the Jordan Pharmacists Association recently hiked medical services and the prices of drugs by 20 to 50 per cent making it increasingly difficult for the limited income groups to cope with the requirements of daily life, he added. The writer said the government must take steps to control the upward spiral in prices in order to help achieve social justice and protect the interests of the majority of the Jordanian people.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Nicola Nasser demanded that the U.S. offer Jordan more assistance and help it face its challenges as part of Washington's recognition of Jordan as a stabilising factor in the Middle East region. The writer said Jordan needs the Iraqi and the Palestinian markets to sell its products, but both the U.S. and Israel are placing obstacles in the country's path. If the U.S. would open the way for Jordan to sell its national products more freely and without any restrictions in the two Arab countries Jordan would not be in need of American financial assistance, he said. The writer said Jordan has proved in many ways that it is sincere in its friendly relations with the U.S. and Europe and it therefore deserves a reciprocal gesture since it seeks to market its products to ensure revenues for its development. Nasser said Jordan has always proved faithful to the West, opposing any threats to Western interests in the region, and it has served as an oasis of security and stability in this turbulent region; therefore it deserves a better and more generous response on the part of its Western friends.

View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Genes, gender, and other lessons from Jordan's elections

ONE OF the busiest sectors of Arab society's epic quest for modernity, social justice, and economic well-being is the ongoing campaign for women's equal rights — the idea that women should not suffer legal or social obstacles to their full personal development and participation in public life, especially political life. The November parliamentary elections in Jordan provide a fascinating opportunity to analyse all that is noble and often wrong in the prevalent Arab approach to promoting women in politics.

The substantial organisational, financial and political support for female parliamentary candidates last month was characterised by direct, sustained, very public, and virtually unprecedented combined support by the Royal family, the institutions of the state, Jordanian and international non-governmental organisations, research centres, women's groups, the mass media, and other institutions. Consequently, 17 women candidates ran for parliament; but all lost. Whether or not Jordan is representative of the entire Arab World (I think it is), it merits attention as it now analyses the failed experience of women in politics precisely because the failure followed such strong support for women candidates at both the elite and grassroots levels.

The most striking thing about the 17 women candidates who ran for parliament was that they broadly mirrored the lack of political credibility that defined most men candidates. (This may reflect the deeper dilemma that Arab parliaments are essentially cultural rather than political institutions, and that most Jordanian candidates and voters who participated in the November election did so more out of cultural obligation than ideological commitment). Very few women candidates last month were experienced politicians; some had local backgrounds in charitable societies and NGOs; and most had never before ventured into the unforgiving public jungle of political ideas. Most of the women, like most of the men, offered predictable platforms and promises that sounded more like the policy programmes of the last 37 Jordanian cabinets than like bold new attempts to respond to real voter concerns with creative political dynamism. The reason all the women lost is not primarily that they were women, but rather that most of them were mediocre candidates, with dull platforms and little voter appeal.

The second most striking thing about the women's electoral performance was the relative success of two women — Toujan Feisal and Emily Naffa'a. Though neither won a seat, both performed strongly, and their experiences may point the way to women's political successes in the future.

Toujan Feisal had won a seat in the previous parliament in 1993 with less than 1,900 votes. She more than doubled her appeal this year, securing 4,227 votes in the contest for the Circassian/Chechen seat (but lost to Nayef Mawla's 5,213 votes). Her vote total was more than any of the three men who won seats in Amman's 2nd District (whose totals ranged from 3,617 to 2,806 votes); she outvoted all five men who won seats in Amman's 5th District (who secured from 3,000 to 1,969 votes). Of all the seats in the Amman region, her 4,227 votes ranked her seventh among the 18 winners; she received more votes than 12 of the 18 men who won in Amman.

The most striking thing about the 17 women candidates who ran for parliament was that they broadly mirrored the lack of political credibility that defined most men candidates.

Emily Naffa'a performed almost as well. Her 2,292 votes were not enough to win the Christian seat in Amman's 3rd District (won by Khalil Haddadin's 3,134 votes). Yet, her vote total averaged almost double the votes of two victorious men in her 3rd District (Ra'ad Bakri's 1,306 votes, and Lutfi Barghouti's 1,044 votes). Of the 18 successful parliamentary candidates from Amman, three had less votes than Naffa'a.

Had the electoral system been configured in a more rational manner, these two women would have won seats in parliament. Why did they do so well, relatively speaking? I would suggest the reason is mainly because they offered real political programmes that responded to citizens' concerns, and that were articulated in a dynamic, appealing style. They deviated from the traditional "women's" issues, and reached out far beyond the artificial box they were placed in because of their status as Circassians or Christians. They addressed problems that concerned a majority of citizens — problems of social and economic equity, fair access to basic human services, political dignity, the quality of democratic governance, Jordanian and Arab identity issues, Jordan's regional role and global relations, human and personal rights, and other such important matters. These same issues were explicitly articulated in the hundreds of meetings by and for women that took place throughout the country in the two years preceding the elections; but for the most part these issues were not effectively translated into political platforms by charismatic female candidates.

Feisal and Naffa'a represent the latest example of a historic phenomenon we witness in Jordan and other Arab lands — the slow, quiet birth of genuine politics, i.e., the contestation of public power via a capacity to tap and organise an ideological consensus among like-minded people who work together on a basis other than the power of the state, tribe, religion or ethnicity. It is fascinating that these two women also share a strong Arab nationalist dimension.

The parliamentary elections showed that gender is not the issue, and therefore a quota for women in parliament — as many women demand — is probably not the answer. A quote for women would simply institutionalise the artificialities and unrealistic expectations which we witnessed among many women during the run-up to the elections this year. A better future should build on the lessons, successes and mistakes of the past. Our immediate past tells us that the big issue that concerns most citizens in Jordan — and throughout the whole Arab World, I would argue — is the equitable provision of rights, services, and opportunities for the ordinary Arab citizen. Candidates who address this issue are likely to do well, regardless of their genes or gender.

French policy towards Arab World remains steady since days of De Gaulle

By Pascal B. Karmy

THE VERY recent visit of French President Jacques Chirac to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) evokes in Arab minds the orientation of the French policy towards the Arabs and in particular the Palestinians, a policy which was drawn up initially by President Charles De Gaulle.

Since De Gaulle came to power in 1958 following the appeal of the people of France, he laid down the broadlines of French foreign policy towards the Arabs as well as towards Europe (especially with regard to the then EEC and NATO), the U.S. and the then Soviet Union. This policy remained in force regardless of the party in power whether rightist or socialist.

What interests the Arabs is De Gaulle's policy towards the Arabs and Israel. For this purpose we should go back to the time just before the 1967 war which Israel had launched against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Prior to 1967 France was the principal supplier of excellent arms to Israel. French public opinion was strongly in favour of Israel. The French leftist parties, with the exception of the communists, sympathised with Israel and the great majority of the rightist parties was anti-Arab because of the war of independence in Algeria.

However on May 24, 1967, a few days before Israel launched the war on the above-mentioned Arab states, the French Council of Ministers under the presidency of De Gaulle issued a statement to the effect that whichever state first launched the war in the Middle East will be considered the culprit (coupable in French) in the eyes of the French government. Paris' position was explained quite clearly by De Gaulle himself to Abba Eban, then Israeli minister of foreign affairs, when he received him after the session of the council of ministers. De Gaulle stressed to Abba Eban that it was up to the four great powers (namely France, the U.S., United Kingdom and Soviet Union) to resolve the problem. Abba Eban replied in defence that Egypt had already committed an act of war by closing the Tiran Straits (Bab Al Mandab) and thus prevented Israeli ships from passing through. De Gaulle was not convinced with Eban's argument and told him that in a short while France, in concert with the great powers, would allow the passage of Israeli ships through the Tiran Straits, that Israel must be patient and should not imagine itself to be sufficiently strong to enable it to resolve all its problems alone. The Arabs on the other hand, De Gaulle added, were not sufficiently strong to threaten the security of Israel. The last words addressed to Abba Eban were. "Do not start the war." Abba Eban understood well that France would not assist Israel if it resorted to war and he informed his government accordingly.

Israel did not heed De Gaulle's advice and started the war on June 5, 1967. Previously, on May 31 after the meeting with Abba Eban De Gaulle, declared the embargo on the sale of arms to Israel so as to keep France neutral in the event of the break-up of war. Since then France established friendly ties with the Arab states, which bore fruit for France such as the sale of arms to Arab countries and the welcoming of French investments in the Arab World.

This relation continued on solid ground during the presidency of Giscard d'Estaing and even during that of the socialist François Mitterrand who was considered a close friend of Israel. Although Mitterrand opposed De Gaulle's policy internally and externally when in the opposition, he nevertheless did not deviate from De Gaulle's general policy in foreign and defence affairs when he became president including friendship with the Arabs. When Mitterrand visited Israel during his first presidency he frankly told the Israelis in the Knesset that the Palestinians are entitled to self-determination.

When President Chirac visited Jerusalem in 1996 he was shocked by the manner he was treated by the Israeli police as witnessed on Arab and Israeli television. Israel has thus exuded its resentment against France for its unbiased policy towards securing the rights of the Palestinians to independence. President Chirac's visit to the UAE and the sale of updated Mirage war planes will no doubt enhance the friendly relations between France and the Arabs and will conduce to a sustained support of the Palestinians in their struggle to attain their independence from the nefarious Israeli hegemony.

The arms trade in the Middle East: On the up again

By Peter Feuilherade

THE INTERNATIONAL arms trade is expanding again after several years of decline, according to the latest edition of The Military Balance, the authoritative annual reference work on the world's armed forces published on Oct. 14 by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London. In 1996 the global arms trade grew in value by about eight per cent to nearly $40bn, boosted mostly by demand from the Middle East and East Asia. This continued an upward trend noted in 1995, reversing seven years of overall decline since 1987, although the trade is still 60 per cent below levels during the latter years of the cold war.

The IISS cites several reasons for the growing arms trade. It says tensions in the Middle East, as well as north-eastern Asia, have helped to create a ready market for arms. Favourable oil prices have allowed the Gulf states to finance large orders placed after the 1991 Gulf war. And sustained modernisation in East Asia, and more recently Latin America, has contributed to recent increases in arms transfer — a reflection, according to the IISS, of the uncertainties in the international security environment since the end of the cold war.

Saudi Arabia in the forefront

Saudi Arabia was the Middle East's biggest spender on defence in 1996. The Military Balance estimated that it and Israel accounted for half the region's military spending, with Riyadh alone spending a third of the total. It said Saudi Arabia had taken delivery of 72 U.S.-made F-15 fighters, 48 Tornado multi-role combat aircraft and 20 Hawk training planes from Britain in 1995-97. Although the Saudi government has not disclosed its defence budgets for 1996 and 1997, The Military Balance estimates that the kingdom "spent over $17bn on defence in 1996, and 1997 outlays are expected to be of the same order," it said.

Encouraged by higher oil prices in 1996, Middle East and North African states imported nearly 40 per cent of the weapons sold in the world, worth some $15bn. Riyadh took by far the largest share with $9.1bn, followed by Egypt with $2.3bn in imports. However, many of the weapons systems delivered last year had been ordered in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war, as the ruling families of the Gulf feared for their own and the region's security. John Chipman of the IISS told a news conference that the scale of spending by the Gulf states was likely to decline as that cycle of purchases drew to a close. Among the other big Middle East arms importers were Kuwait, with $1bn, and Israel with $900m.

The Military Balance cited setbacks in the Middle East peace process as one factor prompting regional powers to stock up on weapons.

The Military Balance cited setbacks in the Middle East peace process as one factor prompting regional powers to stock up on weapons. It estimated that Israel spent some 10 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on defence, higher than an assessment by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Israel, which spends $3bn of U.S. aid each year on defence, accounted for 20 per cent of Middle Eastern defence spending. The IISS report said that after taking into account money spent on intelligence services, emergency construction, inventory build-up and civil defence, the military share of Israel's GDP was close to 12 per cent.

The U.S., Britain and France are the world's leading weapons exporters. The U.S. was by far the biggest exporting weapons worth $17bn last year, which gave it a 42.6 per cent market share. Britain was second, with sales of $8.8bn (22.1 per cent market share), followed by France, with $5.6bn (14.1 per cent market share). Russia, which in the Soviet era was the world's biggest supplier, exported only $3.4bn worth last year, its market share down to 8.6 per cent from 35 per cent a decade ago. Israel was the world's fifth arms supplier, with exports worth $1.3bn last year, giving it 3.3 per cent of the global trade, more than twice China or Germany's share.

Middle East International

Hussein Youth City approaches 30, still provides breathing space in today's congested Amman

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The sprawling Hussein Youth city has become a magnet for people from all walks of life, flocking to its open grounds to breathe and play under its evergreen trees in a bid to escape the fumes and crowds of the capital.

Officials say that nearly half of Jordan's four million population pass through its eight gates every year to enjoy a host of activities ranging from sports to art festivals and weddings.

"The Youth City is the mother of all sports cities in Jordan and the lungs of Amman," said its general manager Abdul-Ghani Tabbalat adding that the *1,200-dunum area is being overused by people who have nowhere else to go:* "People come here to breathe," he explained.

Outside his office, some 15 boys, all around 16 years, were playing soccer in the car park. Most of them had just met, but despite not knowing each other, they *hadn't met by chance.*

"We come here every Thursday," said Essam. "We can play with anyone here."

Ahmed, who plays for Al Jazireh Club, added: "We don't have anywhere else to go... We have no playgrounds in Sweileh."

A passing jogger echoed similar sentiments. "I can run here without being hit by cars," he said.

A couple who'd stopped nodded in agreement. "The trees are nice. You can have a nice walk here," said the woman.

The many trees are a rarity in Amman, which has expanded in all directions over the last three decades, taking city planners by surprise and leaving few open spaces for people to enjoy.

City planners in Europe allocate between 8-15% of the total urban area for what is known as open spaces — from parks to playgrounds.

But officials acknowledge this has not been the case in Amman, which has *embraced three waves of Palestinian* refugees from successive wars since Israel's creation in 1948.

With a 3.6 per cent population growth every year — among the highest in the world — housing became a priority, and open spaces a luxury.

Lack of open space has become a problem, residents and urban planners say. People need houses, yes, but children need playgrounds and sports-lovers need space for their exercise.

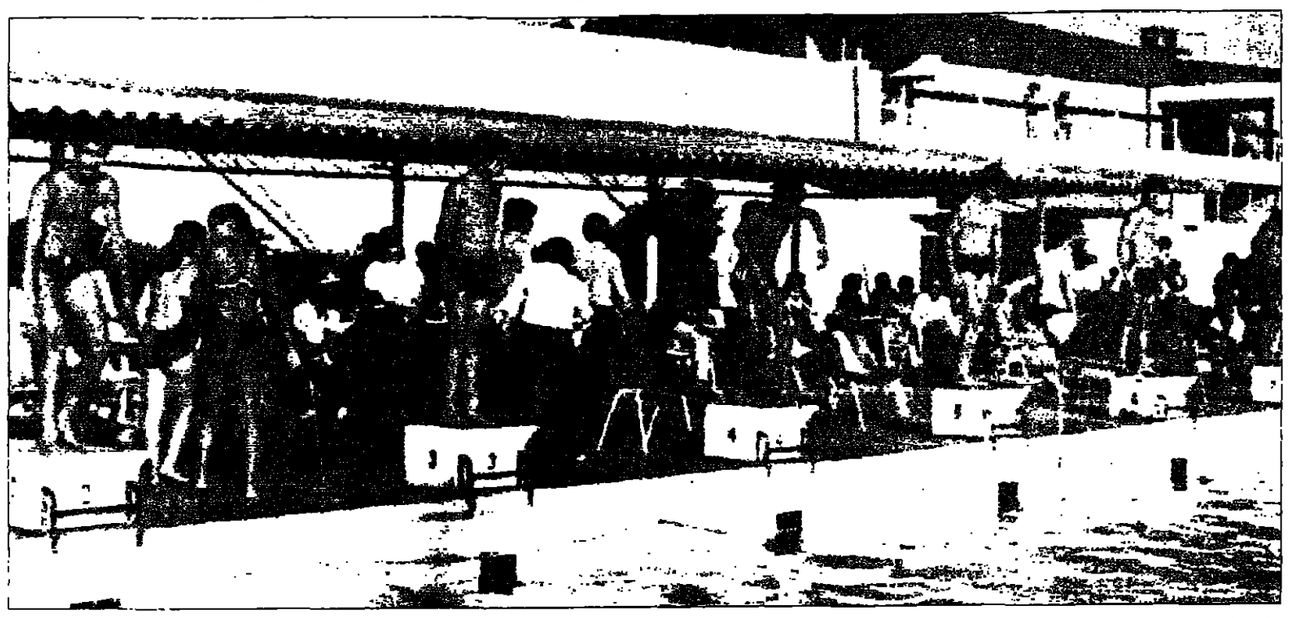
Completed in 1969, the Hussein Youth City has become the capital's largest open space, but is in addition a fine sports centre. Every sports federation has training facilities there. Its five large indoor halls cater for boxing, martial arts, squash, table tennis, handball, gymnastics, swimming and many more.

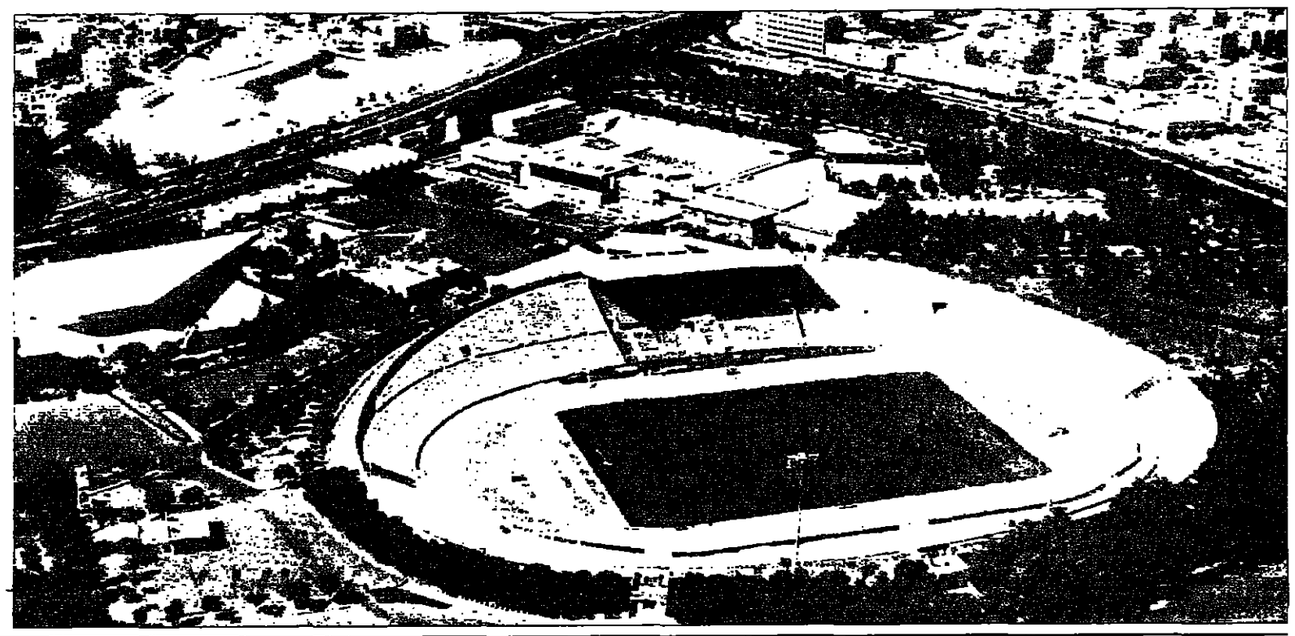
The 3,000-seat Sports Palace, the largest of the five, hosts all the major indoor events in the country, and is set to be the main hall for the 2001 Pan-Arab Games — but only after capacity is expanded to seat 8,000.The Al Hassan Squash Centre is said by many users to *be the finest in the Middle East. There* are two football stadiums. With a capacity of 30,000 spectators, the Amman International Stadium plays host to most premier league games, all international games and is the home for the official athletics track. A rugby pitch is currently being built. Add to that the Martyrs *Memorial and the Palace of Culture* (which hosted the 1995 Middle East Economic Conference, the 1997 folkloric music festival and many other events), and you have something for everybody.

Government-run and sponsored, these public facilities are available free to *anyone who is a member of the appro*priate federation.

Yearly running costs amount to around JD 2 million, which include approximately 300 staff, and are high, because the Youth City is always operating. If it's not for sports events, it's for festivals at the Palace of Culture, or wedding parties at some of the banqueting halls. The place can easily be open from six in the morning until two or three at night.

Mr. Tabbalat estimates that some 2000 people come through the gates in the morning just to walk or jog. This is probably an exaggeration, but it usefully illustrates why the 1975 name-change of what used to be called the Hussein Sports City was no mere whim by His Majesty: there has been a change of purpose for the Youth City. And with between 50 - 60% of the population under the age of 15, not only is the name more appropriate; the problem of finding open spaces to alleviate the Youth City has become more pressing.





Above, boys get ready for a swimming race at the outdoor pool at Hussein Youth City. Below, aerial view of Hussein Youth City

Ban on New Year's Eve alcohol has some looking at other options

By Fariouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians wishing to drink the New Year in will have to look at other options thanks to a government ban on alcohol during the Muslim month of fasting, Ramadan, which this year coincides with the turn of the year.

Under the ban, most hotels in the Kingdom will not be able to throw extravagant New Year's Eve parties, popular among the young and old alike; thus stripping them of a main source of income.

For the duration of the annual fast, all Jordanians are barred from buying alcohol, and foreigners may drink only at home or in bars inside most hotels.

The precise timing of the fast and the ensuing ban depends on the sighting of the new moon, but this year, Ramadan is expected to start on Dec. 28 or 29.

The Ministry of Interior sent memoranda earlier this month to all hotels and nightxclubs in Jordan reminding them of the ban.

"If the government is banning alcohol out of respect to religion, then I believe they have the right to do so, and I share that respect," Walid Khalidi, an engineer, told the Jordan Times.

One frustrated Jordanian said he was leaving for London to celebrate the break of the new year.

Iraqi vocalist Kathem Saher in performance at the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

"There is no atmosphere in this country," said the man, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We want to have the choice: either to fast [during] Ramadan or to celebrate New Year's Eve, but we don't have the choice here, so we celebrate by leaving the country," he added.

A local daily wrote: "Most Jordanians will celebrate the new year by throwing private parties or by watching entertainment shows at home through their satellites."

But for many of Jordan's poor — over 30 per cent of the four million population — the ban is not a source of worry or frustration.

"I can hardly find money to eat bread," said a street vendor. "And you want me to worry about parties?"

Local newspapers have been awash with ads placed by travel agencies inviting Jordanians to celebrate New Year's Eve in nearby cities like Beirut, Nicosia, and the Egyptian resort towns on the Red Sea, where drinking is allowed.

Travel agencies who rely on incoming tourists and hotels say they have been affected by the ban.

"For us, this has been a huge loss of profit," Tareq Nasser, sales manager at the Inter.Continental Hotel, told the Jordan Times. "And do not forget, this will go on for the next three years."

"We hope that our Ramadan-style evenings during the month will help make up for the hotel's losses," he said, referring to parties where customers can drink juices and eat special sweets, play cards and backgammon, and smoke the argileh (water pipe).

"But a glass of orange juice for JD5 is not like selling a bottle of Black Label whisky for JD120," he added. For those who do not mind celebrating the New Year five or six days earlier, many hotels and restaurants have announced that they are hosting special parties.

The Inter.Continental said all tickets for a Dec. 26 performance *featuring popular Arab singer* Wadi Safi have been sold out. Over half of the 1,200 tickets — each costing $125 — have been sold by the hotel for a dinner featuring popular Iraqi singer Kathem Saher the day after.

For those on a tighter budget, the Regency Palace Hotel has a dinner with live entertainment by Lebanese singer Hyam Al Said and American belly dancer Topaz every night until December 27 for JD25 per person.

Some restaurants are counting on their luck. They plan to hold unpublicised New Year's Eve celebrations, serving alcohol in tea cups and mugs.

However, tour operators promoting three-night trips to nearby countries for the occasion say demand has been slack mainly because of financial constraints and general cold weather conditions.

Except for tourist havens on the Red Sea, such as Egypt's Sharm Al Sheikh and Hurghada, hotels in Egypt and Syria follow similar bans on alcohol during Ramadan and hence will not be hosting any New Year's Eve festivities.

"Despite our reasonable offers, the packages have not been received well. Demand has been weak and much lower than we had expected," said Muna Owaidah from the Jerusalem Doorway travel agency.

Packages offered by many travel agencies, including air tickets, range from three-nights in Lebanon at JD170 to JD280 for the same duration in Sharm Al Sheikh.

"Many people are in a dilemma because of their moral respect for Ramadan," added Ms. Owaidah. "They feel they will never be able to forgive themselves if they celebrate New Year's Eve and go back to observing their fast the day after."

4 Arabic dailies boycott Parliament

(Continued from page 1)

to remain in a small room designated for them."

Mr. Qudah, a former president of the press association, added that the newspapers had presented their case to several lawmakers who promised full attention including taking their complaint to the speaker of the Lower House.

Deputy Abdul Razzaq Tbeishat said he would discuss the issue with the Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour today, adding that the journalists have been doing a great job, and that the deputies in general are pleased with them and will do all that was possible to help defuse the crisis.

Deputy Khalil Haddadin told the Jordan Times that the presence of the media and its coverage of parliament is an asset. He said: "Although I am all for regulatory or disciplinary measures I am against restricting measures."

Parliament's secretary general, Mohammad Masalha, defended the secretariat's position saying it was not impeding or restricting the movement of the press, rather "regulating it in a disciplinary and far more convenient way."

He said that a special room for the press has been designated with all the necessary equipment. " Why do they want to use other facilities, or even enter the House main chamber?" he asked.

He added that the general secretariat will not take any action because it had not received any statement from the press.

The Jordan Times was the only daily that did not join the boycott.

Jordan rejects Netanyahu's statement on settlements

(Continued from page 1)

cised Mr. Netanyahu's hard-line statements.

He said U.N. resolution 242, which calls for trading land for peace — the basis of the seven-year old peace process — and the PNA's interim peace deal with Israel called for Israeli redeployment from 90 per cent of the occupied territories.

"We cannot stand as guards watching the lips of Mr. Netanyahu and other Israeli officials," said Dr. Erekat. "Such statements, if Mr. Netanyahu wanted to implement them on the ground, will completely destroy the peace process," he added.

"We hope that Mr. Netanyahu will realise the articles of the agreement that stipulate the principle of land-for-peace and the implementation of resolution 242," said Dr. Erekat.

He said a meeting between Mr. Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris on Thursday failed to achieve any progress in winning an Israeli pledge for a further redeployment.

"We expected Ms. Albright to submit positions that would help redeployment, but she wished to give Mr. Netanyahu more time," Erekat said. "We hope it will not take a long time."

He said U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross will visit the region next month before a meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Mr. Clinton in Washington.

He said a meeting between Ms. Albright, Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu would be held in the U.S. next month.

"It is time that the government of Mr. Netanyahu turns its words into deeds. Stop stalling... delay and procrastination are not be useful to the peace process," said Dr. Erekat.

PhRMA complains of increasing piracy

(Continued from page 9)

in the pharmaceutical sector is greatly dependent on the quality of a country's intellectual property regime. Bombelles said that surveys of American, German and Japanese pharmaceutical and chemical companies have shown that such investors will avoid licensing, manufacturing, research and investing in countries where intellectual property rights are not respected and enforced.

The report also cites preferential pricing protection for local industry in government tenders as a trade barrier. In such cases, local companies can win tender business despite prices higher than those of multinationals, constituting an additional tax burden on citizens who must pay for government purchases of higher priced medicines.

Bombelles reiterated his call for Jordan to enact a "world class" patent law. "Jordan is not only robbing American companies of funds needed to discover and develop new medicines — it is also losing valuable time in forging alliances and attracting investment as companies will inevitably look for opportunities elsewhere," he said. "The prospect is bleak for any foreign participation under the current circumstances."

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the United States of America's leading research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, which are devoted to inventing medicines that allow patients to lead longer, happier, healthier, and more productive lives. Investing nearly $19 billion a year in discovering and developing new medicines, PhRMA companies are the source of more than nine out of 10 prescription drugs in the United States, and leading the way in the search for cures.

Jordan hopes to import more oil from Iraq in '98

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan expects to get a five per cent increase in annual oil imports from Iraq under a bilateral trade protocol when both sides open talks sometime next month, officials said Monday.

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Mohammad Saleh Horani told the Jordan Times the increase was needed due to rising economic activity and population growth.

He could not set a date for the meeting in Baghdad, but officials have said it would take place in a few weeks.

According to a Reuters report, Iraqi Oil Minister Amir Mohammad Rashid has assured Jordan that Baghdad will renew an annual "oil-for-goods" barter deal supplying the Kingdom with its energy needs.

"The Iraqi minister assured us Baghdad wants to continue oil supplies to the Kingdom and plans to renew the annual deal," one official, who requested anonymity, told Reuters.

Mr. Rashid gave the assurance to Mr. Horani at a weekend meeting in Amman where the Iraqi minister stopped on his way back to Baghdad from Cairo, officials told Reuters.

Jordan is currently importing between 75,000 and 80,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Baghdad — its full daily needs — under a 1997 protocol that is renewed every year.

Iraq last year agreed to give Jordan $300 million in free oil supplies and the rest at below the market rates in repayment of an old debt to Jordan.

U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990 have banned all Iraqi exports and allowed Baghdad to import a limited list of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies.

But the U.N. allowed Jordan to continue receiving oil supplies from Iraq because Amman had no other sources of supply at concessionary terms.

Jordan has supplied Iraq with U.N.-authorised goods and services worth $255 million under the 1997 protocol.

Dr. Horani said Jordan had not yet decided whether it will increase the volume of the U.N. authorised exports to Iraq.

"This will depend on the price of the new amounts of oil Jordan is expected to receive from Iraq in 1998," he said.

The Kingdom's private sector has been pushing for an expansion of the protocol to include more commodities outside a separate U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal.

The United States allowed Baghdad in December 1997 to sell $2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicine for Iraqis.

Many Jordanian traders have long criticised tough Jordanian enforcement of U.N. sanctions on Iraq, saying they were unable to sell commodities originally made for the Iraqi market in other countries.

Iraq said Sunday that its trade ties with Jordan would expand in 1998 despite a row between the two neighbours over the recent hanging of four Jordanian smugglers in Baghdad.

"There is no change in policy towards Jordan... On the contrary, we are going to increase trade with Jordan," Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammad Mehdi Saleh told a news conference.

Iraq's hanging of the four earlier this month prompted Jordan to expel seven Iraqi diplomats and recall its charge d'affaires in Baghdad.

Jordan was Iraq's main trade partner and trade link with the world before the Gulf crisis.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply said Monday a U.N. committee monitoring sanctions had approved 25 new contracts worth $31 million in Jordanian exports to Iraq under the limited oil-for-food agreement.

The overall value of approved contracts stands at $173 million.

Row erupts over request to set up chambers of industry in Zarqa and Mafraq

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amman industrialists fear that a possible government decision to licence the establishment of industrial chambers in Zarqa and Mafraq would weaken the industrial sector in the Kingdom.

Wasif Azar, deputy president of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), warned the government that such a step will not help in safeguarding the interests of Jordanian industrialists.

"It is merely for personal reasons. May be some government circles are encouraging such a trend," Mr. Azar told the Jordan Times Monday.

The dispute started when a group of 23 industrialists in Zarqa and Mafraq submitted a request to the government to establish branches in the two cities to avoid what they described as "power centralisation" in the hands of the ACI, which, until now, is the only representative of all Jordanian industrialists in the Kingdom.

ACI members of the board Saturday met with the businessmen representing the new lobby to resolve the issue but failed to have them withdraw their request.

During the meeting, Mohammad Tal, a member of the lobby that defend establishing the Zarqa and Mafraq branches, was quoted as saying that ACI cannot be considered as representative for the industry in Jordan.

"We are against centralisation and we are against the concentration of industry in one area...," said Mr. Tal during the meeting.

Another member of the same block, Thabit Al Wirr, called for establishing industrial chambers in the northern, western, southern and eastern parts on the Kingdom and thereafter forming a "union for all these chambers" but his suggestion was rejected by the ACI, which was established in 1962.

Having failed to reach a solution to the dispute, the ACI leaders, headed by its President Khaldoun Abu Hassan sent letters to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Minister of Industry, Trade and Suppl. Hani Mulki, urging them not to support the establishment of offshoots in Zarqa and Mafraq.

They also submitted new amendments to the law that governs the work of industrial and trade chambers in the Kingdom.

The change includes renaming the ACI to become The Jordan Chamber of Industry with "offices to serve the industrial sector in different cities" in Jordan.

"The formation of new chambers of industry will disintegrate and dissipate the organised industrial work," said the draft law, a copy which made available to the Jordan Times.

But Dr. Mulki told the Jordan Times that the government has not reached a decision on this issue adding that *any possible* reply from the government "would take in consideration the interests of the private sector in the country."

Dr. Mulki emphasised that the present law that governs the work of the chambers of industry and trade "gives the right to the business community to establish chambers of industry in each city."

"We want to reach a consensus between the two sides," said the minister. "We must have dialogue for some time to reach a solution that will satisfy all parties."

"If they reach a deal we will be happy but if not we have to act," Dr. Mulki said.

"The ball is in the government's court and they can submit the new amendments to the Lower House as an urgent case if they want to solve the deadlock," said Mr. Azar.

He said that this issue was raised during a meeting held last week between ACI leaders and Dr. Majali

Mr. Azar said he met with Dr. Mulki who told him that the present law "permits the establishment of industrial chambers in different parts of the Kingdom."

"The government can bring things back to normal but if the government supported their demand it will be harmful to the industry," added Mr. Azar.

Reception at the Austrian Embassy — the Commercial Section

AUSTRIAN Commercial Attache Cort Altmen hosted a reception at his residence on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year. Dignitaries, businessmen and journalists were invited to the reception. Dr. Cort delivered a speech welcoming the guests and called for further economic cooperation between Jordan and Austria.

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ANNOUNCE:
Closed
from Wednesday December 31st, 1997.
Reopen
Saturday January 10th, 1998.
"Happy New Year"

It's Like
MAGIC
DA JANI Jewellers
Amra Forum Hotel Shops.
Amman.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't get flustered. Just check things off your list. Finish projects you started. Follow the advice of a close friend and an expert. Don't worry if something doesn't turn out the way you planned. It may take longer than expected, but not to worry. It'll work out fine.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The boss has all sorts of new assignments for you. Don't get that stubborn look on your face. It only makes the boss nervous. Instead, be nice as you can be. The nicer you are, the faster the work will get done, and the sooner you can get out of there!

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This morning is wonderful for romance. Your conversation is inspiring. You need an intellectual relationship before you feel comfortable with any other kind. Tonight there's a problem with money. Don't fret: simply get the less expensive item.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You're breaking through to a new level. Hopefully you're doing it without much trauma. You'll go through a transition phase when you feel like an idiot, but that always happens when you're learning something new. Just relax and it'll be much easier.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Someone's trying to teach you something a little outside the norm. It has to do with communications, and might involve a person or topic you found intimidating. You're learning how to let go of stereotypes and allow the situation to be different than you thought it would be. Relax and enjoy.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) There's still too much going on. Take the time to get organised. This afternoon is best for finishing old projects, rather than starting new ones. Things may not turn out the way you anticipated, but don't panic. Everyone is going to have a great time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're making an excellent impression on a person you admire. This person is a very interesting conversationalist. Schedule time for that interaction as soon as possible. Don't start a new project tonight. You'll be much more effective making do with what you've got.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Somebody you've been talking to in private chatters like a jay bird. If you want to know the latest gossip, you've got a great asset. If this person starts blabbing about you, you've got a great liability. The trick is to exploit the former and inhibit the latter. Good luck.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A friend's remark will trigger an insight. Just because you thought something was real doesn't mean it was. There may be other perspectives to consider. If you look at an old decision anew, you're liable to come up to a very different conclusion. Try it.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're strong, powerful and good looking. Your boss might ask you to help make decisions. Don't put up a fuss. Just allow him or her to pay you well for it. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are witty and charming. Unfortunately, you have tons of things to do. Instead of being a social butterfly, take care of practical matters first. Don't complain too much about it, either. That makes you look wrinkled and wizened. Relax and you'll look marvellous.

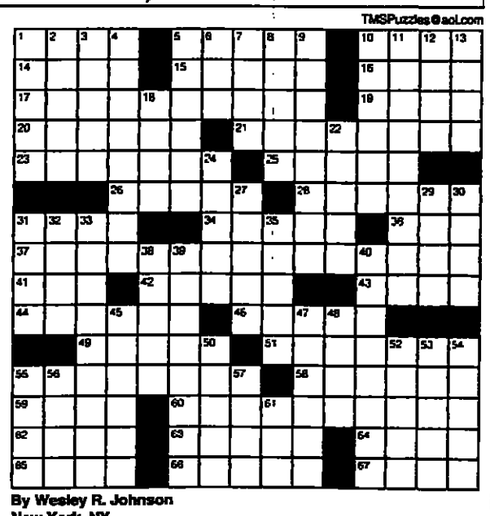
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are a shopkeeper's dream. You would buy presents for everybody on your list, not once but three or four times if you could. You should have a never-ending source of income. You would make sure it stayed in circulation constantly. Have a great time, but take care.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



ACROSS
1 Immediately, if not sooner
5 Arose
10 Dissimulation
14 Melancholy
15 Puerto Rican seaport
16 Comic Johnson
17 With 60 Across, some advice from 37 Across
19 Currency of Teheran
20 Start of a recovery
21 Billy Crystal film, "City __"
23 Howard and Caron
25 "Caribbean Queen" singer
26 Starts the poker pot
28 Sampled
31 Getz or Kenton
34 Film featuring "I Only Have Eyes for You"
36 Southern constellation
37 Starmaker perhaps
41 Choice abbr.
42 True blue
43 Ages and ages and ages
44 Suggest additional revisions
46 For rent, in London
49 Story so far
51 Sun rooms
55 Predict
58 Obliquely
59 Pennsylvania port
60 See 17 Across
62 "Back in Black" rockers
63 Delight
64 Yemen capital
65 Final position
66 Added shading
67 Those people

DOWN
1 "Rush, Rush" singer
2 Gradient
3 Bee and Em
4 Peevish
5 Petite piano
6 Mazel __
7 Till pile
8 Eye and: pref.
9 Writer or painter
10 Winter coats
11 Face east
12 Night light
13 Marine shockers
18 Broad smile
22 Discontinue
24 Like a reed-choked swamp
27 Assassinated Egyptian
29 Switch tail?
30 Euphemistic oath
31 Reminder of a wound
32 Legend
33 Celestial planetesimals
35 Director Forman
38 Peter __ Tchaikovsky
39 So far, no
40 Precipitator
45 Pick up
47 Packed in
48 "Lohengrin" lady
50 Italian director Pasolini
52 Hindu poobah
53 As a unit
54 Backed into a corner
55 Tight closure
56 Boat in "Jaws"
57 Currency of China
61 A1A, I65, or 66, e.g.

By Wesley R. Johnson
New York, NY

A	F	L	A	T		H	A	S	P	S		P	E	G
C	L	E	T	E		A	D	I	E	U		O	D	E
H	A	V	E	A	S	T	A	B	A	T		G	A	L
E	K	E		C	H	E	M		G	L	O	O	M	S
S	E	E	T	H	E		S	T	R	E	W	S		
			H	I	L	L		H	E	R	E	T	I	C
B	O	S	U	N		E	P	E	E	S		I	S	O
E	S	T	S		K	E	V	I	N		I	C	E	R
A	S	U		K	U	R	T	S		F	A	K	E	D
M	A	D	E	I	R	A		M	O	O	G			
		P	E	L	O	T	A		M	O	O	L	A	H
K	N	O	L	L	S		L	S	A	T		A	N	A
A	O	K		J	A	B	B	E	R	W	O	C	K	Y
T	S	E		O	W	L	E	T		A	B	E	L	E
E	E	R		Y	A	T	E	S		Y	E	S	E	S

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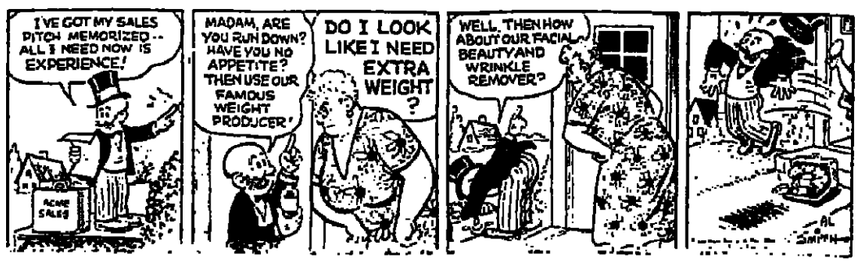
Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF®

By Glasbergen

"You carved our initials in your dental plaque. I guess that's better than cutting up a tree trunk."

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HAWRT

YIEPT

YENNIT

GOUTUD

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

Print answer here :

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: RURAL LINGO VENDOR DAINTY
Answer: What the successful politician excelled at — RUNNING

Privatisation of energy sector splits NEPCO into three firms

By Ahmad Al Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As part of the government's drive to privatise the energy sector, the National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) will be split into three companies: one for power generation, the second for distribution, and the third for transmission, officials said.

The first two companies, which will be registered today, will be owned by the private sector while the third will be government-owned.

The officials said that the government endorsed the scheme on Oct. 4.

According to the scheme, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources will be in charge of the organisation and policy planning, while the responsibility for the regulation will be entrusted to an independent regulatory body.

The law setting up the regulatory commission was approved in principle and referred for legal review.

According to the plan, the electricity tariff will be restructured in order to arrive at a gradual elimination of all subsidies. As such, all entities operating in this sector will work on commercial basis.

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Customs tariffs to be lowered to 30 per cent from next year

** A GRADUAL reduction in customs tariffs will begin next year on most goods except for some items like cars, alcohol and cigarettes in order to abide by international economic and commercial obligations and requirement, Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani has said. Noting that customs tariffs are presently at the 40 per cent level, Dr. Anani indicated that a 10 per cent reduction starting early next year, will bring the rate to the 30 per cent level.

Industrial sources told Al Dustour that that means reducing the protection ceiling for the Jordanian industry to 30 per cent. "This situation will reflect negatively on the Jordanian industry which is heavily burdened with taxes and fees on raw materials and on the finished products in addition to the high cost of water and energy," they said.

The sources added that reducing the customs protection ceiling should be gradual over at least a ten-year period and not during four or five years." The reduction should go with other direct or indirect measures to support the Jordanian industry," the sources demanded.

They called on fellow industrialists to support the government in the efforts to ease the negative effects on industry and to debate fundamental issues with the government instead of discussing the set up of chambers of industry in the governorates.

Commercial sources welcomed the reduction and told Al Arab Al Yawm that a *30 per cent customs level is enough to* counter the fears that the industrialists raise. They stressed that the rate is not the real protection but "rather the quality and competitiveness which are the real assurance and protection."

The commercial sources indicated that the partnership with the European Union has provided the Jordanian producers with a large market that covers more than 400 million people with high purchasing power. Noting that the association agreement will rectify the trade imbalance with the European Union, the sources saw a rise in Jordanian exports if the industrial sector improves quality and upgrades competitive capability.

According to Moheiddin Al Jamal, an industrialist, the reduction in customs will damage the Jordanian industry because of the lower level of protection which is most needed at this time due to the infancy of the industries and the incapability of Jordanian industrialists to compete in outside markets.

He noted that although Israel has joined the World Trade Organisation and signed partnership accords, the Jewish state continues to protect Israeli carpet industries by customs tariffs and taxes in excess of 120 per cent. Mr. Al Jamal urged the government to apply a policy that backs local *industries similar to policies adopted by* many neighbouring countries.

Mr. Al Jamal concluded by pointing out that the consumers will not benefit from the reduction in customs because the government will resort to other taxes to compensate for any drop in the treasury revenue (Al Dustour + Al Arab Al Yawm).

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 22/12/97 18:48

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7806	0.6014	1.4372	130.34	1.4335	1746.40	2.0076	5.9620
DE Mark	0.5616	-	0.3375	0.8078	73.15	0.8049	980.24	1.1271	3.3472
GB Sterling	1.6629	2.9618	-	2.3936	216.40	2.3838	2904.96	3.3394	9.9172
CH Franc	0.6958	123.79	0.4177	-	90.63	0.9968	1213.11	139.55	4.1444
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3655	0.4610	1.1029	-	1.0993	13.39	153.85	4.5685
CA Dollar	0.6976	1.2511	0.4265	1.0118	1.10	-	1226.85	1.4092	4.1867
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0193	0.3441	0.0823	1341.20	0.8205	-	11.49	3.4118
NL Guilder	0.4981	88.70	0.2995	71.69	64.92	0.7142	869.07	-	2.9697
FR Franc	0.1677	0.2986	0.1008	24.1030	21.85	0.2404	33.66	33.6600	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7500	0.3770	3.6400	0.3044	3.6728	1522.50	3.3999
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2891	0.5317	5.1340	0.4293	5.1803	2147.39	4.7953
Saudi Riyal	0.2667	0.1891	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	406.00	0.9066
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9469	-	9.66	0.8074	9.74	4038.46	9.0183
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0836	1.01	418.27	0.9340
Kuwait Dinar	3.2852	2.3292	12.3193	1.2385	11.96	-	12.07	5001.64	0.9340
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0210	0.1026	0.9911	0.0829	-	414.53	0.9257
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4657	2.4631	0.2476	2.3908	0.1999	2.4123	-	2.2331
Egyptian	0.2941	0.2085	1.1030	0.1109	1.0706	0.0895	1.0803	447.81	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	17.30	17.43
W. Texas	18.42	18.43
Bonny	17.30	17.43
Dubai	15.78	16.10
UL Gas	172.00	173.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4751	0.16037	0.38341	34.7729
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48506	0.16374	0.39147	35.5038
KW Dinar	3.2852	5.85138	1.9755	4.72367	428.449
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.7259	1.59515	3.81388	345.901
CY Pound	1.9089	3.4011	1.1482	2.745	248.89

PhRMA complains of increasing pharmaceutical piracy in Jordan

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — In a formal report to the U.S. government, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) identified Jordan as a significant and growing regional source of pirated pharmaceuticals. Specifically, PhRMA estimates that Jordanian companies may inflict $25-$50 million a year in lost American exports.

PhRMA's complaint was made in a formal annual submission called the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE), a process by which American industry informs the United States Representative (USTR) of serious trade and export losses due to inadequate intellectual property protection or other barriers.

PhRMA noted in its report that despite protests, Jordanian pharmaceutical piracy continues to accelerate, targeting the newest and best selling American pharmaceutical products.

"American companies are increasingly hesitant to offer new products in Jordan due to inadequate patent protection," said PhRMA Assistant Vice President Thomas Bombelles," and this can only slow the transfer of medical technology and diminish the quality of patient care — at a time when Jordan aspires to become a medical centre of excellence."

PhRMA's complaint was based on recently completed industry survey of 16 U.S. and European research intensive pharmaceutical companies active in Jordan.

The survey found that Jordanian companies registered over thirty unauthorised copies of U.S. and European drugs during an eighteen month period from January 1996 until June 1997. The survey indicated that Jordanian companies are increasing the number of pirate copy registrations, and that over 50 per cent of the pirated products were of American origin.

In October, PhRMA asked the USTR to intensify diplomatic efforts to obtain adequate and effective patent protection for Pharmaceuticals in Jordan, citing a rise in pharmaceutical piracy over the past year.

In April, the USTR named Jordan as a Special 301 "Watch" country, citing *inadequate intellectual* property protection for pharmaceutical and other intellectual property sensitive industries, such as computer software and video.

"At a time when Jordanian industry is searching for direct investment to drive economic growth, an increase in pirating activities and a substandard intellectual property system can only hurt the country's prospects" said Bombelles. "This contrasts sharply with regional developments — countries like the United Arab Emirates have announced it will implement a patent law protecting pharmaceutical compounds by January 2000 in an effort to attract both inward and foreign investment."

In the submission to the U.S. government, PhRMA also highlighted weak copyright enforcement, allowing Jordanian companies to copy freely an innovator's product label and promotional material. Each year, American companies *spend billions of dollars in* clinical trials examining the safety, tolerability and efficacy of novel pharmaceutical compounds.

"The misrepresentation and infringement of copyrighted scientific and promotional materials is of serious concern to American companies, and potentially misleading to healthcare professionals and patients," said Bombelles. "In Jordan, pirating companies often present exclusive clinical data as pertaining to their own products, which may have little or no original data to support claims."

Bombelles cited numerous recent studies, including two by the International Finance Corporation, an arm of the World Bank, that make it clear that valuable, high technology investmet

(Continued on page 7)

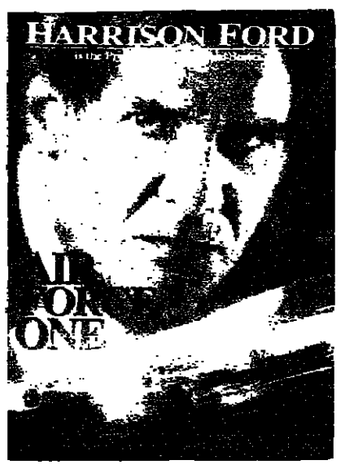
Movies ABDOUN GALLERIA THEATRES

TONIGHT

GALLERIA 1 — GALLERIA 2

اجمل افلام والت ديزني — هاريسون فورد .. في

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE — AIR FORCE ONE



3:30 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30 — 3:30 / 6:15 / 8:30 / 10:45

وما زال يعرض فيلم المصير في سينما بلازا مجمع بنك الاسكان / ت ٦٩٩٢٣٨

المصير .. اول فيلم عربي بالصوت المجسم دولبي ستيريو.. الفيلم لم يسجل فيديو

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 22/12/1997

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	346.000	249.000	ARAB BANK	15.0	1.23	9	3220	1054990	328.00	325.25	2.75-
N	2.340	1.680	JOR.NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	24	13997	25235	1.80	1.80	-
S	3.600	1.800	BANK OF JORDAN	6.0	0.00	3	350350	700665	2.00	1.90	.10-
	1.200	.890	MID.EAST INV.BK.	78.8	0.00	1	400	480	1.15	1.20	.05+
S	2.680	1.730	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	10.4	6.00	13	22950	39734	1.73	1.74	.01+
	5.300	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.4	3.77	5	7550	38883	5.15	5.15	-
S	4.180	1.850	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	10.9	0.00	7	1325	2679	1.99	2.04	.05+
+	.980	.660	JOR.GULF BANK	3.8	11.11	42	95815	60582	.66	.63	.03-
S	4.050	2.110	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	11.8	4.16	4	1150	2693	2.40	2.31	.09-
	1.530	1.090	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	3	1450	1583	1.09	1.09	-
S	4.990	2.500	ARAB BANKING CO.	21.9	0.00	1	250	758	2.89	3.03	.14+
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 232.62	%CHG: -0.78		112	498457	1928279			
	2.950	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.6	5.56	2	1116	3013	2.80	2.70	.10-
	4.250	3.800	JERUSALEM INSUR.	10.6	5.13	2	800	3120	3.90	3.90	-
	2.100	1.590	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	5.6	7.61	2	1050	2069	2.00	1.97	.03-
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 115.81	%CHG: -1.37		6	2966	8202			
	2.050	1.550	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.21	11	12314	23604	1.92	1.92	-
S	7.500	3.750	VHCLS. OWNERS FED.	9.1	4.23	1	100	414	3.94	4.14	.20+
	1.010	.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.9	6.45	1	250	233	.89	.93	.04+
	8.900	6.700	ALRA'I	15.0	5.97	4	20100	168837	8.38	8.38	-
	1.680	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	18.7	0.00	11	218800	268703	1.22	1.23	.01+
	4.000	2.890	ARAB INTL.INV.EDUC.	10.3	0.00	12	11450	45273	3.95	3.95	-
	1.090	.900	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	5	1750	1665	.94	.95	.01+
	2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.51	1	150	254	1.67	1.69	.02+
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.53	%CHG: +0.22		46	264914	508980			
	1.160	.930	ATTAHQEEB	g	0.00	1	1000	1160	1.16	1.16	-
+	4.450	2.910	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.2	3.86	12	6817	19611	2.92	2.85	.07-
	7.050	5.570	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.08	7	65000	403650	6.05	6.21	.16+
	11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	10.2	8.47	13	666	6921	10.33	10.50	.17+
	6.700	4.500	JORDAN TANNING	7.1	5.17	3	596	3506	5.90	5.80	.10-
	3.150	1.330	INDUSTRIAL COMM.AGR.	g	0.00	1	150	213	1.41	1.42	.01+
	7.000	5.800	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	10.4	3.09	2	200	1297	6.40	6.48	.08+
	4.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.5	4.81	9	19700	81952	4.17	4.16	.01-
	2.940	2.200	JORDAN DAIRY	9.5	8.70	4	551	1548	2.81	2.81	-
	1.650	1.020	JOR.PIPES MANFCT.	16.6	5.97	3	950	1273	1.34	1.34	-
	2.800	1.800	GENERAL MINING	g	0.00	3	750	1485	1.90	1.99	.09+
	6.000	4.400	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	14.1	4.35	4	1216	6984	5.75	5.75	-
	3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM.IND.	6.2	9.43	9	2650	6915	2.60	2.65	.05+
	.650	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.9	0.00	9	3350	1543	.46	.47	.01+
	.770	.510	NATIONAL INDS.	g	0.00	17	16250	9795	.60	.60	-
	1.160	.410	INTERMED.PETRO.CHEM.	g	0.00	3	750	325	.44	.43	.01-
	.860	.530	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	g	0.00	3	5850	3326	.57	.57	-
	2.970	1.380	UNIV.CHEM.INDS.	13.7	6.58	1	200	304	1.45	1.52	.07+
S	3.000	1.160	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	30.8	0.00	7	3050	3935	1.35	1.28	.07-
	.890	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	g	0.00	4	3000	1800	.61	.60	.01-
	1.610	1.160	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	15.2	5.88	4	96000	115195	1.20	1.19	.01-
S	1.800	.820	UNIV. MOOD.INDS.	P	.25	13	4450	3832	.86	.86	-
	1.410	.690	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	10.6	12.66	81	86450	66849	.76	.79	.03+
	1.620	1.320	NATL. CHLORINE	13.9	4.76	4	2250	3308	1.48	1.47	.01-
	1.040	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	11	4350	3915	.90	.90	-
	1.970	1.340	EL -RAY READY WEAR	50.7	0.00	36	21280	30931	1.47	1.44	.03-
	1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	1	250	300	1.19	1.20	.01+
	1.200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	45.9	0.00	1	275000	277750	1.05	1.01	.04-
	.840	.570	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.4	16.67	9	14700	8820	.62	.60	.02-
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.06	%CHG: +0.90		275	637426	1068442			
	GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 168.04	%CHG: -0.14		439	1403763	3513903			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 22/12/1997

	.560	.300	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	g	0.00	20	55100	19283	.35	.35	-
	.610	.340	JOR.TRADE FAC.	9.6	0.00	24	56500	20368	.37	.36	.01-
	.800	.660	UNION INV. 50%	g	0.00	25	77750	17105	.71	.72	.01+
	.570	.360	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	54	152700	80741	.50	.53	.03+
I	1.230	.850	UNITED FOR FINAN.INV	67.2	0.00	1	250	323	1.23	1.29	.06+
N	2.150	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	E	0.00	1	250	525	2.00	2.10	.10+
N	1.000	1.000	ARAB JOR.INVEST.CO.	E	0.00	4	36000	36000	1.00	1.00	-
	.380	.140	JOR.INDS.MATCH-JEMCO	g	0.00	4	9000	1530	.16	.17	.01+
	.650	.440	ARAB FOOD & MED.	g	0.00	8	5300	2501	.49	.47	.02-
	.530	.280	ARAB INTL.INV.TRD.	35.7	0.00	3	3000	970	.32	.31	.01-
	.750	.380	NATL.MULT.ENG.MANUCO	g	0.00	25	72118	41106	.54	.57	.03+
N	1.200	.890	READY MIX CONCRETE	12.1	0.00	2	12000	12000	1.00	1.00	-
	.660	.580	MIDEAST PHARM. 75%	E	0.00	5	5300	3173	.66	.66	-
I	1.430	.860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	g	0.00	4	2750	3956	1.42	1.44	.02+
	.730	.550	RAZI PHARM.	E	0.00	1	500	345	.70	.69	.01-
	.470	.280	INDS. ENG.	g	0.00	2	950	295	.32	.31	.01-
	.830	.570	INDS. CERAMIC	16.8	0.00	13	6500	4249	.63	.64	.01+
	.820	.490	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	27	20100	11657	.56	.57	.01+
N	1.000	.660	NAT.ALUMINIUM. 75%	94.6	0.00	7	4900	3107	.68	.68	-
N	1.000	.670	MODERN FOOD IND. 75%	E	0.00	1	100	45	.71	.70	.01-
	GRAND TOTAL					231	521068	256337			

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Klinsmann back at Tottenham

LONDON (AFP) — German striker Jurgen Klinsmann is on his way back to struggling English Premiership club Tottenham.

He is rejoining the crisis-hit White Hart Lane club on loan until the end of the season.

The 33-year-old international, who was named as Footballer of the Year in his one season at Spurs in 1994/5, was expected to arrive in London later on Monday.

Spurs chairman Alan Sugar announced the return of Klinsmann, who has been playing for Sampdoria in Italy, on TV.

"We've got Jurgen coming back. He's on a plane, he'll be landing in about half an hour's time and subject to passing a quick medical this morning down at the local hospital in the city.

"He's back to help us out for the rest of the season."

Klinsmann's return is a remarkable turn-around for both the player and Sugar, who parted on acrimonious terms when the German left White Hart Lane halfway through his two-year contract.

He signed for Spurs from French club Monaco for £2 million in 1994, becoming part of the 'Famous Five' under manager Ossie Ardiles.

The all-out attacking formation, which saw Klinsmann link up with Darren Anderton, Teddy Sheringham, Ilie Dumitrescu and Nick Barmby, eventually cost Ardiles his job and he was replaced by Gerry Francis.

Under the new boss, Klinsmann proved inspirational as the London club reached the semi-final of the FA Cup, where they were beaten 4-1 by eventual winners Everton.

But Sugar was furious when Klinsmann took up a get-out option in his contract and decided to return to Germany, where he joined Bayern Munich.

Bayern subsequently went on to win the UEFA Cup the following season, but Klinsmann moved on again last summer — this time to Sampdoria in Serie A.

But Spurs fans gave Klinsmann a rapturous send-off in his final game at White Hart Lane and will be more than happy to forgive and forget for his quick departure.

He will be seen as the talismanic figure to help Tottenham climb clear of their current difficulties.

Francis resigned last month but Spurs suffered devastating defeats - 6-1 at home to Chelsea and 4-0 away to Coventry — under new Swiss boss Christian Gross before a 3-0 win at home to bottom club Barnsley on Saturday lifted some of the pressure.

However, Spurs remain in the relegation zone and will look to Klinsmann to lift them out of the mire.

Sugar now hopes to get the player back into the Spurs side as quickly as possible.

"That depends on getting his registration through from the Italian FA, and being Christmas time, we've got to get all the paperwork through the FA here in England and the paperwork through the Italian FA," he added.

"But we'll certainly have him playing at Manchester United, no question of that," Sugar said of the Jan 10 fixture.

Sugar made light of the past differences between himself and Klinsmann, insisting the German superstar was determined help out his former club at a critical time.

"I think we had better push everything in the past behind us. He has kept a very watchful eye on the club since he has been away," Sugar told BBC Radio.

"He really enjoyed his time here. We have solved our problems a long time ago, and he really does like the club and enjoyed the way the British public treated him.

"He has seen we are in trouble, and the opportunity has come up for him to help us out for a few months — and we have grabbed it."

Spurs defender John Scales was looking forward to the extra cutting edge Klinsmann will give his team-mates up front.

"Someone of Jurgen's experience and quality is a great boost to the squad. He is certainly going to enhance our squad, because we have struggled a bit, up front especially, and scoring goals has been one of the problems we have faced," hew said.

Ajax Amsterdam's Finnish striker Jari Litmanen (R) jumps up to claim a high ball from PSV Eindhoven defender Boudewijn Zenden during their Dutch first division league match in Amsterdam. PSV led Ajax 4-2 late in the second half (Reuters photo)

Swedish Match leads race to Sydney

SYDNEY (AFP) — Swedish Match was 224 miles from the finish line in the third leg of the Whitbread Round The World yachting race Monday.

Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match, the winner of the second leg from Cape Town to Fremantle, held a 3.8 mile advantage over another Swedish entry, EF Language skippered by Paul Cayard, when positions were reported at 8 a.m. (2100 GMT Sunday).

Organisers expect the leader to cross the finish line at Sydney's Opera House around 6.30 a.m. Tuesday at current speed.

Norway's Innovation Kvaerner was third, 12.3 miles from the leader and just ahead of Britain's Silk Cut. Chessie Racing of the United States was fifth and Monaco's Merit Cup sixth.

Back marker Brunel Sunergy of The Netherlands was 22.9 miles astern of Swedish Match, but averaging the best boat speed of the nine-strong fleet at 12.2 knots.

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Dalglish accuses Beckham of cheating

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Furious Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish accused Manchester United golden boy David Beckham of feigning injury to get Alessandro Pistone booked during the Red Devils' 1-0 English Premiership win at St James Park on Sunday.

England ace Beckham went down clutching his face after being caught by a raised boot from the Italian, who was one of seven players cautioned by referee Peter Jones.

But television replays showed Pistone's raised boot had caught Beckham no higher than his chest, and Dalglish raged: "That's not fair.

"Pistone's foot was high but Beckham went and held his face, even though he was nowhere near it.

"If he had been hit in the face that would've been fine, but he didn't. The pictures don't lie. He shouldn't have held his face.

"You've got to look at the referee — he was the worst man on the pitch. But the players have the opportunity to avoid getting fellow professionals booked.

"We can lie in our beds and sleep tonight. We didn't try to get anybody in trouble. If somebody does that, it's up to their conscience."

Dalglish's outburst was surprising after his own player, David Batty, appeared lucky to escape a red card for a pair of violent tackles on Gary Neville and Phil Neville during the second half.

Inter and Ajax lose unbeaten records

PARIS (AFP) — Inter Milan and Ajax Amsterdam lost their unbeaten records this weekend but both stayed top of their leagues.

German international Oliver Bierhoff scored in the dying seconds as surprise packets Udinese scored a 1-0 victory which allowed Juventus to close Inter's lead to just one point after an Alessandro del Piero hat-trick helped them to a crushing 5-2 win at home to Empoli.

Udinese, eliminated from the UEFA Cup by Ajax Amsterdam, took until injury time to take advantage of the weakened state of an Inter team without Brazilian star Ronaldo and Argentine Diego Simeone and move to within four points of Inter.

Ajax lost their first match in 20 games when they crashed 4-3 at home to second-placed PSV Eindhoven who scored through Arnold Bruggink (2), Giles de Bilde and Boudweijn Zenden.

However, Ajax still lead PSV by 15 points.

Barcelona stayed a point clear of rivals Real Madrid on top of the Spanish first division when they recovered after going one goal behind to defeat ten-man Atletico Madrid 3-1.

Atletico, who opened the score when Roberto headed in a 23rd minute corner, finished with ten men after Santi Denia was sent off.

Barcelona stormed back in the second-half with two goals from Luis Enrique and a Giovanni penalty (65).

Real beat Espanyol 2-1 with a brace of goals from recalled Croatian Davor Suker after Pacheta Rojo had oepned the score for Espanyol.

There was no change at the top of the Bundesliga as Kaiserslautern maintained their surprise challenge when they saw off a battling Cologne 3-2 to stay four points clear of champions Bayern Munich, winners by the same score at Wolfsburg.

The biggest score of the day came at Bayer Leverkusen, who went above Schalke into fourth spot after crushing third-placed Stuttgart 6-1 despite being without the suspended Ulf Kirsten.

Ghanaian international Samuel Osci Kuffour scored Bayern's winner at Wolfsburg to keep the Bavarians in the hunt.

Mehmet Scholl and Carsten Jancker had given Bayern a two-goal first half lead before the hosts stormed back through Claudio Reyna and Detlev Dammaier only for Kuffour to hit the winner.

Kaiserslautern had Danish international Michael Schjonberg-Christensen to thank for their win as he hit the winner with nine minutes left to end Cologne's brave resistence. Bulgarian midfielder Marian Hristov with a header and Thomas Riedl got the others for the title-chasers.

Metz go into the winter break in France as the league leaders after their 3-0 win over previous leaders Monaco while Paris St Germain moved above Monaco into second place thanks to a 2-1 win at Rennes.

SCOREBOARD

Spanish League

Racing Santander	2	Real Betis	0
Valladolid	4	Zaragoza	0
Athletic Bilbao	5	Merida	1
Celta Vigo	3	Oviedo	0
Compostella	0	Deportivo Coruna	0
Sporting Gijon	0	Valencia	3
Tenerife	0	Real Sociedad	0
Real Madrid	2	Espanyol	1
Barcelona	3	Atletico Madrid	1

Dutch League

Vitesse Arnhem	2	Twente Enschede	1
Volendam	0	NAC Breda	3
Feyenoord	4	Willem Tilburg	2
Ajax Amsterdam	3	PSV Eindhoven	4
Maastricht	0	FC Utrecht	0
NEC Nijmegen	2	Sparta Rotterdam	0
Doetinchem	2	FC Groningen	3
Fortuna Sittard	1	Roda Kerkrade	1

German League

Hamburg	0	Hansa Rostock	1
Arminia Bielefeld	2	SC Karlsruhe	1
Bayer Leverkusen	6	VfB Stuttgart	1
MSV Duisburg	2	VfL Bochum	0
Kaiserslautern	3	Cologne	2
VfL Wolfsburg	2	Bayern Munich	3
1860 Munich	0	Werder Bremen	1
Borussia Dortmund	2	Schalke 04	2
B. Moenchengladbach	4	Hertha Berlin	2

Belgian League

Aalst	3	Harelbeke	2
Ekeren	2	Antwerp	0
Charleroi	3	Lierse	0

Portuguese League

Rio Ave	3	Belenense	0
Sporting Lisbon	1	A. Coimbra	0
Farense	2	Campomaiorense	2
Chaves	0	Le\a	1
Vitoria Guimaraes	1	Estrela Amadora	0
Benfica	4	Varzim	0

Turkish League

Samsunspor	1	Kocaelispor	1
Trabzonspor	1	Bursaspor	0
Besiktas	1	Dardanelspor	2
Genclerbirligi	3	Fenerbahce	0
Sekerspor	2	Antalyaspor	1
Gaziantepspor	0	Vanspor	0
Kayserispor	0	Istanbulspor	0
Altay	3	Ankaragucu	0
Galatasaray	3	Karabukspor	0

Italian League

Bari	0	Piacenza	0
Brescia	1	AS Roma	1
Fiorentina	5	Atalanta	0
Juventus	5	Empoli	2
Lazio	4	Vicenza	0
Parma	2	Lecce	1
Sampdoria	6	Naples	3
Udinese	1	Inter Milan	0
Milan AC	0	Bologna	0

NBA

Cleveland	106	Utah	101
Boston	99	LA Clippers	77
Vancouver	88	Portland	86

English Premiership

Newcastle	0	Man Utd	1

Confederations Cup final

Brazil	6	Australia	0

NFL

Cincinnati	16	Baltimore	14
NY Giants	20	Dallas	7
Kansas City	25	New Orleans	13
Minnesota	39	Indianapolis	28
Tampa Bay	31	Chicago	15
Tennessee	16	Pittsburgh	6
Washington	35	Philadelphia	32
Arizona	29	Atlanta	26
Denver	38	San Diego	3
Detroit	13	NY Jets	10
Jacksonville	20	Oakland	9
Seattle	38	San Francisco	9

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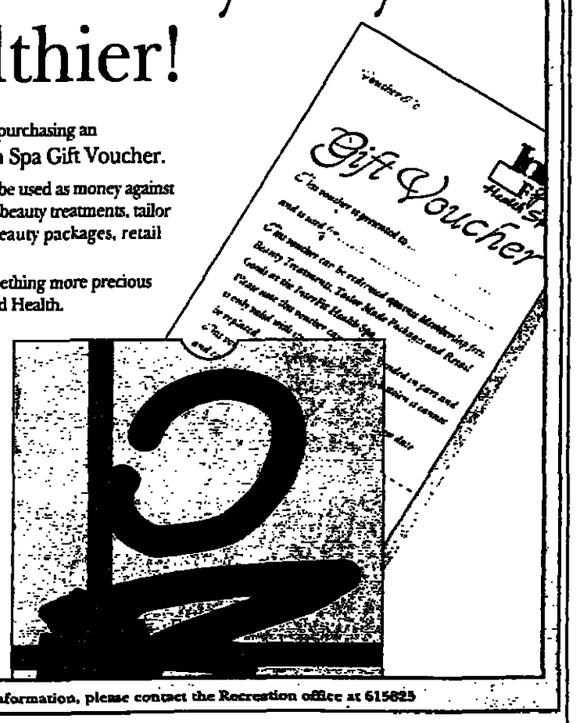

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CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "2"
Richard Gere & Sharon Stone ... in
INTERSECTION
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10,30

CINEMA TEL:690238
PLAZA
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Paris sound out Karembeu

PARIS (AFP) — French first division club Paris St Germain have approached Sampdoria about their want-away French international midfielder Christian Karembeu. "We have been talking to Sampdoria for some time but we have nothing new to report," a Paris club spokesman said Monday. Sampdoria president Enrico Mantovani has banned Karembeu from first-team football after the player refused a transfer to Barcelona having struck his onw deal with Real Madrid.

Bergkamp fined

LONDON (AFP) — Arsene Wenger believes Arsenal's disciplinary problems are behind them and reckons it is time the critics realise the Gunners are going straight. The Arsenal manager confirmed Dutch striker Dennis Bergkamp had been fined by the club, following his poor disciplinary record for dissent on the field. Wenger refused to say how much Bergkamp has had to pay but insists that an improving team spirit can ensure the Gunners still challenge Manchester United for the Premiership title. "We can still fight for the title, but I think first we have to come back to the consistency that we do not have at the moment."

Weather wipes out Madonna

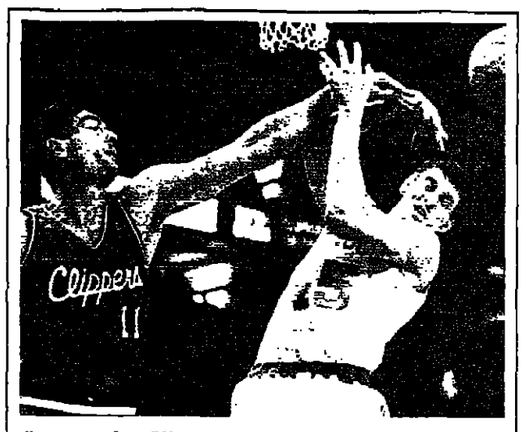
MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO (AFP) — Alberto Tomba's hopes of a Christmas present for his fans evaporated on Monday when the World Cup slalom race here was cancelled. Mild weather made the piste too soft for racing, the organisers said, as the Dolomites lost the third of four races scheduled over the past week. Two downhill races were cancelled at the weekend at Val Gardena, while Christian Mayer swept to victory in Sunday's giant slalom at Alta Badia. Madonna was the sixth cancellation of the men's season so far.

Australian swim coach dies

BRISBANE (AFP) — Joe King, who never learnt to swim but became one of Australia's most successful swimming coaches, died here after a long illness. He was 86. King coached Australian greats Lisa Curry and Hayley Lewis to the Olympics and World Championships. Coach of the year in 1976 and on two other occasions, King did not get his first job as Australian swimming coach until he was 64. Lewis said Monday she loved and respected the man, who coached her to silver and bronze medals at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. "I feel so privileged to have even known him, but to be coached by him will leave its mark forever," she said. Former Australian Olympic swimming coach Laurie Lawrence revealed that King actually never learnt to swim. "He got pushed into a pool one day and I had to save him, I had to jump in and get him out," Lawrence said. "He just never, ever learnt to swim."

Vasco de Gama win Championship

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Vasco de Gama became Brazilian football Champions Sunday despite being held to a 0-0 draw by Palmeiras in the return leg of the final. The two teams also drew the first-leg 0-0 — but Vasco de Gama, who were also champions in 1974 and 1989, took the title because of their superior league results over the season.



Los Angeles Clipper Stojko Vrankovic (L) knocks away a shot by the Boston Celtics' Andrew DeClercq (R) in NBA action in Boston (Reuters photo)

Sanders sends Lions into NFL playoffs

DETROIT (AFP) — Barry Sanders rushed into American football history, carrying Detroit into the playoffs as the New York Jets ran into more they could handle.

Sanders rambled 23 times for 184 yards and a touchdown to complete the second-best rushing season in National Football League (NFL) history and give the Lions a 13-10 triumph over the Jets in a showdown here Sunday.

Sanders joined O.J. Simpson and Eric Dickerson as the only NFL rushers to gain more than 2,000 yards in a season. He also extended to 14 his record streak of games with 100 or more rushing yards.

Sanders finished the season with 2,053 yards, 52 shy of the record set in 1984 by Dickerson and 50 better than Simpson, who cracked the barrier in 1973 in two fewer games than Sanders or Dickerson played.

Detroit's victory ousted the Jets and Washington Redskins from playoff contention while ensuring berths for the Lions, New England Patriots and Miami Dolphins. Minnesota also claimed a playoff bid with a victory.

The NFL playoffs open Saturday when the New York Giants host Minnesota and Jacksonville visits Denver. The next day, Tampa Bay hosts Detroit and New England plays Miami.

The Patriots visit the Dolphins on Monday in the NFL's final regular-season game with the winner hosting their playoff matchup.

San Francisco and Kansas City own first-round byes and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

Reigning NFL champion Green Bay and Pittsburgh also have first-round byes and will host second round games.

Minnesota beat Indianapolis 39-28 as Randall Cunningham threw four touchdown passes, three to Cris Carter.

Pittsburgh lost 16-6 at Tennessee but claimed a fourth consecutive AFC Central division title. The Steelers (11-5) would have had to lose by 65 points to drop the division crown to Jacksonville, which beat Oakland 20-9.

Kansas City beat New Orleans 25-13 to finish an unbeaten home season.

Tampa Bay beat Chicago 31-15 to ensure the Buccaneers their first home playoff game in 17 years.

Dallas concluded a disappointing 6-10 season with a fifth loss in a row, falling 20-7 to the playoff-bound Giants, who won in Dallas for the first time since 1990. The Cowboys had their worst finish since a 1-15 campaign in 1989.

Arizona's Jake Plummer threw a one-yard touchdown pass to Larry Centers with five seconds remaining to give the Cardinals a 29-26 victory over Atlanta.

Cincinnati edged Baltimore 16-14 in another matchup of clubs with losing records.

San Francisco, already assured home-field edge throughout the playoffs, played mostly reserves in a 38-9 foss at Seattle.

Injury sidelines Ewing for season

NEW YORK (AFP) — New York center Patrick Ewing will miss the remainder of the National Basketball Association season following surgery on a dislocated right wrist.

The Jamaican-born star, who led the United States to Olympic gold in 1984 and 1992, suffered torn ligaments and a dislocation during a fall Saturday in Milwaukee.

"Losing Patrick for the rest of the year is a definite blow, but injuries, and overcoming them, are part of this game," Knicks president and general manager Ernie Grunfeld said.

"While our immediate thoughts are with Patrick, we have a great group of guys and have a tremendous amount of depth on this team. Everyone must now step up and help to fill the void that Patrick's injury has left."

The 35-year-old, 11-time NBA All-Star leads the Knicks with 20.8 points and 10.2 rebounds a game. He signed a four-year, $68 million contract before the season began.

In the past 10 seasons, Ewing has missed no more than six gamesa year and only 20 in total. But now he leaves the Knicks 15-10 and eighth in the Eastern Conference.

"We've played without him before, but not for a long length of time," Knicks guard John Starks said.

Ewing suffered the injury with 24.9 seconds remaining in the second quarter of a 98-78 road loss to Milwaukee. He leaped to catch a high pass and was shoved by Bucks center Andrew Lang.

Ewing landed on his tailbone and wrist but stayed in the game long enough to shoot free throws with his left hand.

Christmas was ruined for the Knicks, who watched their star join a host of sidelined NBA elite on the sidelines this year, including Chicago forward Scottie Pippen, Los Angeles Laker center Shaquille O'Neal, Orlando guard Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway and Houston star Hakeem Olajuwon.

Utah guard John Stockton and Miami center Alonzo Mourning are just back after lengthy injuries.

"A lot of teams have got the job done with their good players out of the lineup," Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy said. "We need everybody to play better and harder together."

Ewing's operation was performed here Sunday morning by Susan Craig Scott and Charles Melone with assistance from team physician Norman Scott at Beth Israel Hospital.

The Knicks, who have not won the NBA title since 1973, had surrounded Ewing with veterans to make a title run but the results so far had been lackluster.

Ronaldo named European Player of Year

PARIS (AFP) — Brazilian superstar Ronaldo, who moved from Spanish side Barcelona to Italian club Inter Milan for a world record 30 million dollars in the close-season, has been named European Player of the Year.

The France-Football magazine, which organises the poll, said Monday the 21-year-old was the first Brazilian and youngest player to win the award, which two years ago was opened to non-Europeans playing in Europe.

He polled 222 votes to beat Real Madrid's Yugoslav striker Predrag Mijatovic by 150 votes. French midfielder Zinedine Zidane, who plays for Italian side Juventus, was third.

Last year's Player of the Year was German international defender Matthias Sammer of European Cup champions Borussia Dortmund.

European Player of the Year vote

1. Ronaldo	(Bra) Inter Milan	222 points
2. Predrag Mijatovic	(Yug) Real Madrid	72
3. Zinedine Zidane	(Fra) Juventus	63
4. Dennis Bergkamp	(Ned) Arsenal	53
5. Roberto Carlos	(Bra) Real Madrid	47
6. Andreas Moeller	(Ger) B. Dortmund	40
7. Raul	(Spa) Real Madrid	35
8. Peter Schmeichel	(Den) Man. United	19
9. Jurgen Kohler	(Ger) B.Dortmund	17
10. Matthias Sammer	(Ger) B.Dortmund	16
Christian Vieri	(Ita) Atletico Madrid	16
12. Youri Djorkaeff	(Fra) Inter Milan	15
13. Luis Enrique	(Spa) Barcelona	14
14. Figo	(Por) Barcelona	12
15. Krassimir Balakov	(Bul) VfB Stuttgart	11
Gianfranco Zola	(Ita) Chelsea	11
17. Didier Deschamps	(Fra) Juventus	10
Clarence Seedorf	(Ned) Real Madrid	10
19. David Beckham	(Eng) Man. United	9
Alessandro Del Piero	(Ita) Juventus	9
Alan Shearer	(Eng) Newcastle	9

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠K 7 6 ♥A J 4 ♦7 6 4 ♣A K Q J

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

A - That depends on your methods. If you play that a two-level response is a game force, you can give yourself the maximum room for exploration by simply bidding two spades now. If not, you must jump to three spades to create a force and see what develops.

Q.2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠8 5 ♥A K J 10 9 4 ♦A 9 4 ♣Q J

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?

A - No, we are not trying to trap you, simply to test your bidding judgment. You have a pretty good hand, but you can't be sure of the value of your club holding. Since you are not strong enough to double and than bid hearts, overcall one heart.

Q.3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠A 10 8 6 3 ♥A 2 ♦Q 10 3 ♣A J 4

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

A - A close decision. However, with good spades and a maximum no trump opening, partner would have cue-bid. Therefore, six spades, at best, will depend on a finesse and, at worst, could have no play at all. Pass.

Q.4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠J ♥A J 10 8 6 ♦8 7 ♣A Q J 10 3

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

A - North has shown a better than minimum hand, and you have a full opening bid. However, you know there is a misfit, and you might have no acceptable fit. Bidding four clubs now could easily get you too high. We would settle for three no trump, and await partner's reaction.

Q.5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠K Q 10 4 ♥K 8 6 ♦A 10 ♣A 9 7 4

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	?	

What do you bid now?

A - Once North has denied a 4-4 spade fit, you need to find partner with a maximum no trump if the combined holding is going to stretch to slam. Our choice would be four no trump. Since no trump suit has been agreed, that is not ace-asking but an invitational raise in no trump.

Q.6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

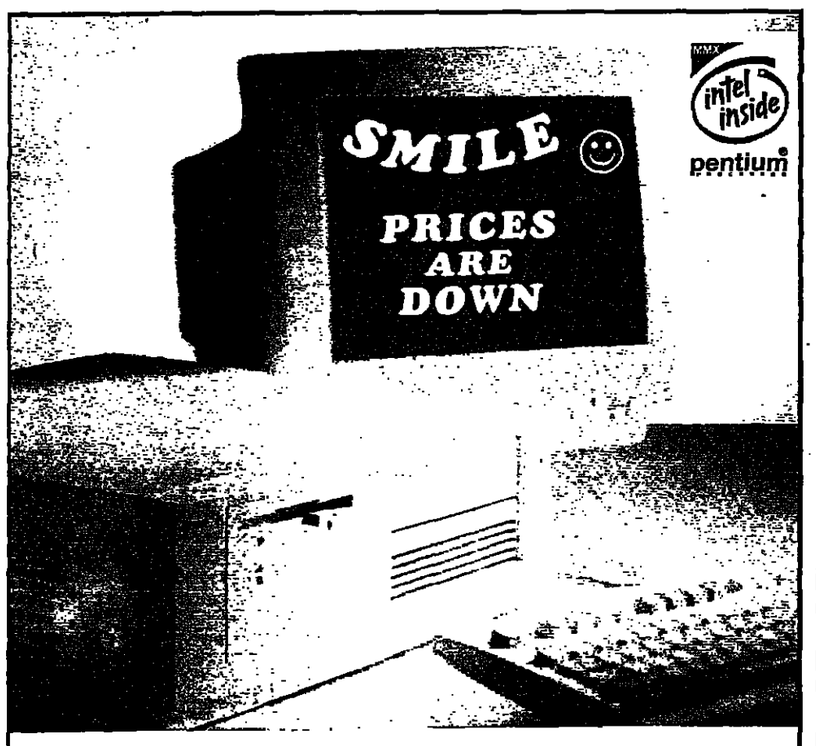
♠A Q J 6 2 ♥K 2 ♦A ♣K Q J 10 5

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

What do you bid now?

A - Partner either has a six-card suit or a very good five-carder to rebid hearts when you have promised nine or 10 cards in the black suits. Therefore, we would look for a grand slem in hearts and start by jumping to four no trump, confirming hearts as trumps by inference and asking for aces.



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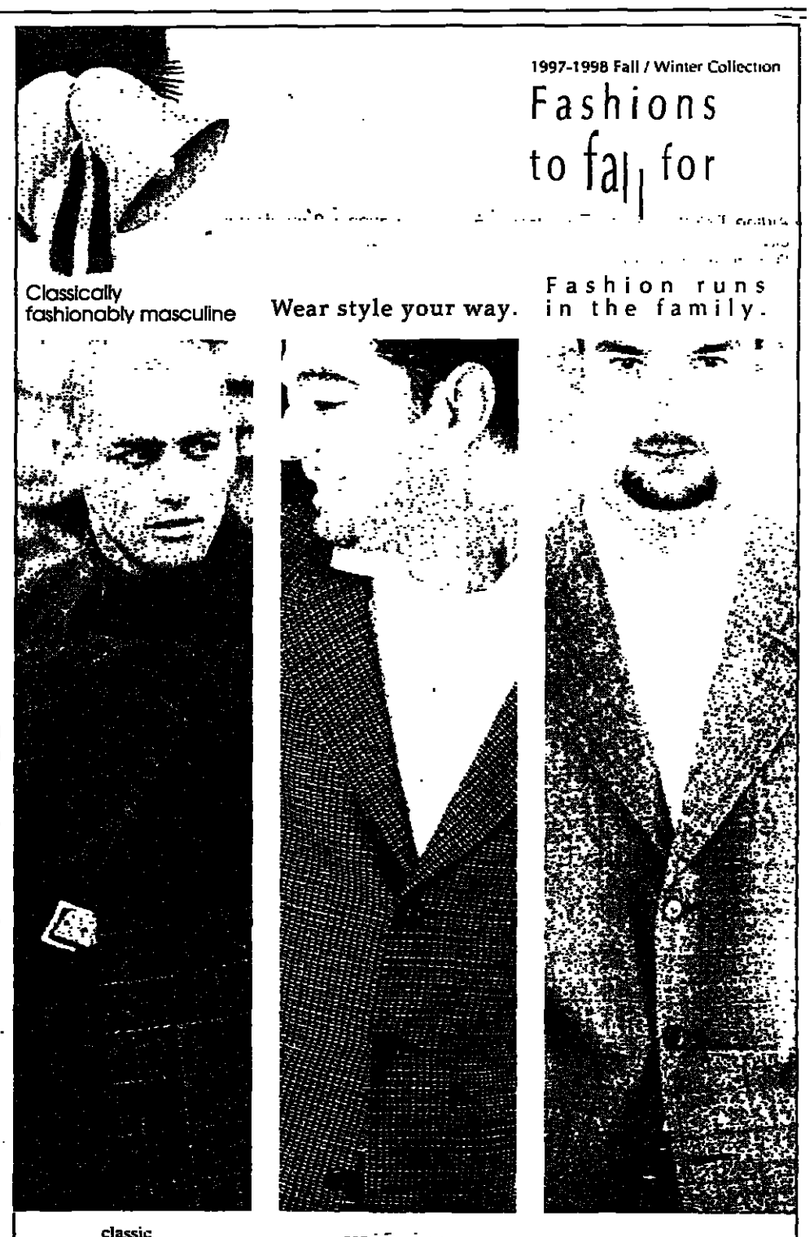

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Mideast peace a priority when Britain assumes EU presidency — ambassador

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Britain will be working closely with the American administration to push the stalled Middle East peace process forward, when it assumes the presidency of the European Union (EU) on Jan. 1, Christopher Battiscombe, the British Ambassador said.

"British ministers have made clear that one of the priorities for our presidency will be renewed efforts to bring about real and lasting peace in the Middle East," Mr. Battiscombe told members of the Jordanian press Monday.

He stressed, however, that the EU will not provide an alternative peace plan for the Middle East.

"Britain is not planning a grand world-changing initiative during our presidency, nor are we planning to compete with the U.S." Rather, he said the British will be seeking to "build a more effective and genuine partnership between the EU and the U.S. to push the peace process forward."

Where Britain and the EU could have an impact, he said, is in the implementation of specific articles of the interim agreements, by providing financial and negotiating assistance for sea and airports in the Gaza Strip, and over the question of safe passage.

In response to a question about the extent of further Israeli redeployment in the West Bank, Mr. Battiscombe said that Britain and the EU "would not prescribe any numbers," but that a half-way figure between the Palestinians and Israel would be most acceptable.

Under the Palestinian-Israeli Oslo accords, the next redeployment is meant to encompass about 30 per cent of the West Bank, a figure the Palestinian National Authority has been insisting on. The Likud-led Israeli government, however, is talking about only a 6-8 per cent troop withdrawal. The Clinton administration is reported to be willing to accept 12-15 per cent.

On jumping to final status talks, a move currently advocated by the Israeli government, Mr. Battiscombe said that Britain and the EU don't believe that this would be feasible, without further implementation of interim agreements.

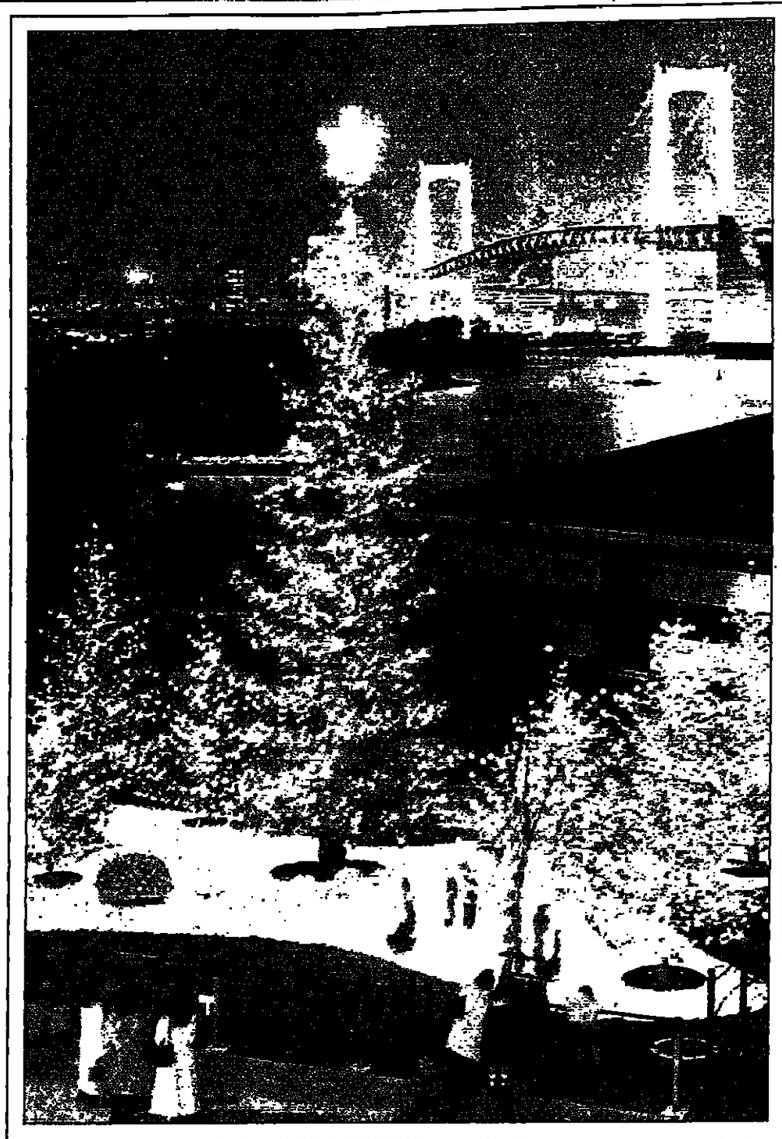
Concerning the situation in Iraq, the ambassador said that the British policy is to "pursue diplomatic solution backed by the credible threat of force."

"It is important that Saddam Hussein should understand that sanctions will only be lifted when Iraq has complied with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions," he added.

In relation to Iran, Britain is encouraged by signs that Tehran is "adopting a more moderate, cooperative and less confrontational stand in its relations with the outside world," he said.

"We are ready to respond and have long believed that the right approach is through holding what we have called a critical dialogue with Iran... but there is clearly a debate still going on in Iran and while this is so, we are bound to remain cautious while remaining ready to work for genuine progress," he added.

In response to Egyptian accusations that Britain is harbouring "terrorists" operating against Egypt, Mr. Battiscombe said that British authorities are about to issue a proposal to change relevant legislation to make it illegal for any person living in the U.K. to fund or assist in terrorism abroad.



HOW BEAUTIFUL YOUR BRANCHES: Visitors to the Odaiba Seaside Park admire a 15-metre-tall Christmas tree lit up with 5,000 illuminations in Tokyo Monday evening. The park lies in the newly-developed Tokyo Bay area and seen over the tree in the background is the Rainbow Bridge which adds brightness to the season's night view (AP photo)

Iraq calls on Security Council to stop playing U.S. 'game'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq called on the U.N. Security Council Monday to resist U.S. efforts to prevent a lifting of the seven-year-old U.N. sanctions on Baghdad.

Iraq's official press made the call ahead of a Security Council meeting Monday to respond to Baghdad's refusal to open its presidential sites to teams of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for disarming Iraq.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen has called for the Security Council to send a "strong message" to Iraq.

"The influential and fair parties in the Security Council should put an end to this dangerous and aggressive game" of the United States, the official daily Al Jumhouriya wrote Monday.

The paper was apparently referring to France, Russia, and China, which prefer a softer approach in the Iraqi-U.N. crisis than do the U.S., and Britain.

"The United States is seeking to distract the Security Council with studies of marginal and secondary issues, to make it forget the fact that there is a population which has been under siege for seven years," another daily, Al Thawra, wrote. The paper is the official organ of the ruling Baath party.

Al Jumhouriya also called Monday for the Security Council to create a "neutral" body to collect information for UNSCOM.

"UNSCOM gets its information from three sources hostile to Iraq: the United States, Great Britain, and the Zionist entity [Israel]," Al Jumhouriya charged.

"The Security Council and the U.N. secretary general should create a neutral body, with participation by several countries and affiliated with UNSCOM, and task it with collecting information from a variety of sources and analysing and evaluating it," the paper said.

Iraq and the Security Council remain deadlocked over whether UNSCOM inspectors will be permitted access to Iraq's presidential sites, which Baghdad calls essential to its national security and sovereignty.

UNSCOM has said the presidential sites must be inspected as part of its mandate to monitor all Iraqi sites which could be used for weapons programmes.

Al Thawra charged that if Iraq agreed to allow UNSCOM inspectors into presidential palaces "the United States would invent a new pretext to satisfy its sadistic streak" and keep the economic embargo in place.

Lifting of U.N. sanctions is tied to UNSCOM's verifying that Baghdad has no weapons of mass destruction or long-range missiles.

The United States has not ruled out the possibility of using military force in the standoff with Iraq and has some 30,000 troops, 350 aircraft and dozens of warships in the Gulf.

Farrakhan meets Qadhafi

CAIRO (AP) — Louis Farrakhan, the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, held talks with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi late Sunday, Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

Mr. Farrakhan and Col. Qadhafi met in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, and discussed "issues confronting the Islamic World" and the Muslim community in the United States, the official news agency said here.

Speaking after his arrival in Libya late Saturday, Mr. Farrakhan said the U.N. sanctions against Libya should be lifted because "they result in the death of women and children," MENA said.

Mr. Farrakhan said the sanctions were "tantamount to a weapon of mass destruction," state-run Libyan television said in a report monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp. in London.

The American political activist is on a world tour and has already visited Iraq, which has been under U.N. sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. State Department officials urged Mr. Farrakhan to avoid Libya and Iraq, saying his visit could be used for anti-American propaganda.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Libya in April 1992 to try to force Col. Qadhafi to turn over two Libyans wanted in the 1988 explosion of a Pan Am Jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

The sanctions limit diplomatic contacts with Libya, ban air travel to and from the country, freeze some foreign assets and forbid the sale of some oil equipment.

Col. Qadhafi has proposed that the suspects be tried in a "neutral country," a move both the U.S. and Britain have rejected.

This is Mr. Farrakhan's fourth visit to Libya in two years. He last visited in January 1997, when he and Col. Qadhafi led a joint prayer service. He also visited Libya in January and September 1996 amid controversy over Col. Qadhafi's pledges of funds for Mr. Farrakhan's projects.

The U.S. Treasury Department prohibited Mr. Farrakhan from accepting a $250,000 prize he was awarded by Col. Qadhafi in September 1996 for his human rights work. The treasury also barred his group from accepting Col. Qadhafi's offer of a $1 billion gift for Nation of Islam activities.

In addition to Iraq, Mr. Farrakhan has also visited Jordan, Egypt and the autonomous Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Ratings target of Lebanon TV clampdown — commentators

BEIRUT (AFP) — First the Lebanese government clamped down on sex on television, then it banned a TV interview with an exiled opposition leader — but many say the real target of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's wrath is the higher ratings for TV stations rival to his own.

It all started earlier this month when Mr. Hariri called in executives from private television stations and state-owned Tele Liban to ask them to stop airing what he described as shocking programmes.

The proliferation of TV talk shows on Christian-owned stations testing the frontiers of traditional taboos had provoked the anger of Lebanon's religious leaders.

Programmes dealing almost exclusively with sex, and even broaching such topics as incest and paedophilia angered leaders of all Lebanon's religious denominations, Christian, Muslim and Druze alike.

"Whatever is being shown on televisions does not reflect our culture and our society," said Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddin, president of the Shiite Muslim High Council.

Maronite Christian Bishop Khalil Abinader called for the drafting of a "national moral pact," and Lebanon's top Sunni Muslim official launched a multi-denominational campaign for public morality.

Information Minister Bassem Sabeh increased the pressure on the offending stations by threatening them with legal penalties if they continued shocking viewers.

"Why do we have so many programmes on rape, incest and homosexuality as if they were the true problems of this country? These programmes show the worst image of our society," he said.

He called on broadcasters "to take account of the threat which this moral anarchy poses for the new generation."

Lebanon's Central Security Council, summoned by Interior Minister Michel Murr, has decided to deal with the threat by demanding prior viewing by the censors of all TV broadcasts.

It also urged broadcasters not to air movies and talk shows dealing with sex or violence before a midnight watershed.

Alongside the campaign against explicit talk shows the government started tightening the screw on the political views television stations were allowed to air.

Christian-owned TV stations had been giving air-time to exiled politicians opposed to the role in Lebanon of Syria, which maintains a garrison of 35,000 troops in the country.

During a satellite interview from Paris with privately-owned MTV station, former President Amin Gemayel accused Mr. Hariri of offering him $30 million to support his nomination as prime minister.

The programme prompted a tirade from Mr. Sabeh accusing certain television stations of "turning themselves into platforms for political insults."

When MTV sought to run a similar interview with exiled former leader Michel Aoun who was overthrown in 1990 by force of Syrian arms, Mr. Sabeh pressured the station to cancel it.

The move prompted free-speech demonstrations by students, professionals and opposition members which brought mainly-Christian east Beirut to a standstill for several days.

It even met with criticism from within the government — Health Minister Suleiman Franjieh, a pro-Syrian Christian, said the ban was a "wicked measure" in which "Damascus is in no way involved."

And in the face of the scale of the protests Mr. Hariri ordered the release of arrested demonstrators, saying he wanted to "appease the heated atmosphere in the country."

But many observers say the real target of the billionaire prime minister's campaign is not so much the content of the Christian stations' broadcasts as their continued success in winning higher ratings than his own Future TV.

The "issue of immorality on television was a cover for a fierce battle over ratings and international broadcast rights between local stations," Beirut's Daily Star newspaper commented.

It said Future TV had "instigated the issue after facing harsh competition from rival stations, particularly the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation - International (LBCI).

LBCI, which belonged to the disbanded Christian Lebanese Forces militia during the 1975-1990 civil war, has the largest audience and the lion's share of the Lebanese advertising market, worth around $40 million a year.

Like Mr. Hariri's Future TV, LBCI also broadcasts by satellite and is widely viewed in the lucrative Gulf market.

LBCI Chairman Pierre Daher explicitly accused his rivals of teaming up with the authorities to launch a "moral crusade" against his station for "political reasons."

Somali warlords agree to set up federal government

CAIRO (AFP) — Somali warlords were set to announce a historic agreement here on Monday to set up a federal state and a three-year transitional government, ending six years of civil war.

The Cairo Declaration wraps up 41 days of thorny discussions between representatives of the 26-faction Somali National Salvation Council (NSC), including Ali Mahdi Mohammad of the Somali Salvation Alliance, and warlord Hussein Mohammad Aideed of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA).

The agreement was to be announced at the Egyptian foreign ministry later Monday at a formal ceremony attended by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid and several ambassadors.

The accords will be approved at a national reconciliation conference to be held in January in Baidoa, northwest of Mogadishu, and attended by 465 delegates chosen on a tribal basis, according to a text of the agreements obtained by AFP.

"The sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Somali Republic are inviolable," said the statement of the agreement co-signed by Aideed and NSC current Chairman Osman Hassan Ali (known as Ato).

"The government will be based on a federal system with regional autonomy. The model of the federal system and its implementation will be prepared by the transitional government," the statement said.

The factions also agreed on "the establishment of a presidential council composed of 13 members to be elected by the National Reconciliation Conference by a simple majority of the participants."

They said "the president will be elected by the members of the presidential council by a simple majority vote and can be removed from office by a two thirds majority vote."

The prime minister will be likewise elected by "simple majority vote" at the reconciliation conference and can be sacked by a two-thirds majority vote of the presidential council.

"The transitional period for the transitional government will be three years and could be extended for two more years, if necessary, by the constituent assembly," the statement said.

It stressed that the constituent assembly would be composed of 189 members "with a chairman, two vice chairmen and a secretary who is not a member of the constituent assembly."

The factions also agreed on the establishment of "an independent judiciary system in accordance with judiciary laws and regulations." But they banned the creation of "special courts."

The national reconciliation conference was initially planned to be held on June 10 in Bossasso, north of Mogadishu, but it was postponed several times and it was finally decided to be held in January in Baidoa.

Somalia's two most powerful warlords, Mr. Ali Mahdi, who controls north Mogadishu, and Mr. Aidid, who holds south Mogadishu, will be represented by 80 delegates each.

Sources close to the meetings said the future president of a unified Somalia would be chosen from the Hawiye clan to which Mr. Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi belong.

The prime minister will be chosen from the Darod clan and the speaker of parliament from the Rahanwein, the sources said.

Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and the country has been ruled by warlords for the past six years.

Turkey, Greece expel diplomats

ANKARA (R) — Turkey and Greece Monday announced a round of tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats in a spy row that signalled a worsening of relations between the two traditional rivals.

The Turkish foreign ministry said it had asked the Greek embassy to withdraw an administrative diplomat at its Istanbul consulate for "activities incompatible with his status," the diplomatic euphemism for spying.

"He was engaged in intelligence-gathering operations," ministry spokesman Sermet Atacanli said.

Neighbour Greece strongly denied the accusation and said it would reciprocate.

"We will answer by asking a Turkish diplomat to leave. The Turkish accusations are ridiculous and aim at creating fresh tension between us," a government official told Reuters in Athens.

The two historical rivals' relations have worsened recently.

U.S. President Bill Clinton last week called on Ankara and Athens to resolve their "irrational" differences, particularly over Cyprus.

A Greek embassy spokesman said the Turkish foreign ministry had summoned the Greek ambassador Friday and asked him to withdraw the diplomat, Eusteratios Haralambus, within seven days. It was not clear Monday whether the diplomat had left yet.

Jordan Times Lottery Rules

No. 20, Dec. 23, 1997

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Thailand's formerly-rich take aim at politicians

BANGKOK (R) — Surrounded by used luxury cars, jewellery and a small plane, Thailand's self-proclaimed "formerly rich" vented their anger at the people they blame for their country's economic meltdown — politicians, as they took turns hurling tennis balls at effigies of various government leaders. The goal: to see which former prime minister was most unpopular by how many times his effigy was knocked into a bin. Former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh turned out to be the most popular target, said a boy handing out balls at $0.22 for three tries. The prize for three hits? A "formerly rich" handkerchief that people could use to wipe their eyes when they thought of their losses.

South Korean chicken-sexers ruffle Australian feathers

SYDNEY (R) — Who's the fastest chicken-sexer, an Australian or a Korean? That question is at the centre of a row at an Australian poultry farm, where a decision to hire South Korean chicken-sexers has ruffled local feathers. The decidedly unglamorous job is performed by examining the backsides of one-day-old chicks or inserting a tube to view the birds' sex organs, with male chicks being fattened for sale and females sent back to the breeding pens. Poultry firm Steggles says Koreans are more accurate, but a local chicken-sexer said Australians were faster and less error-prone.

World-racer gets little red car for Christmas

FIORANO (R) — Former Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher got just what he always wanted from his team for Christmas — a nippy little car in racing red. The 30-year-old Fiat 500 was a far cry from the sleek Ferrari Schumacher usually powers at full throttle around the world's racing circuits. But he said it was his dream come true. "This was my first car and I always wanted to have another," the German told reporters after being presented with the curvy little car at a squad Christmas party. Schumacher immediately leapt into the driving seat and performed two laps of Ferrari's private test track. "It's great," he said.

Stuntman hospitalised in golfing accident

TAMPA (AP) — For daredevil Evel Knievel, a guy who spent his life flying through the air on a motorcycle, you'd think golf would be a relatively safe pastime. But a fall on a golf course — compounded by years of bone crushing falls from his motorcycle — sent Knievel to the hospital for hip replacement surgery. Knievel has broken at least 35 bones and undergone surgery 14 times in his stunt career, so a hospital bed is familiar territory. "The doctors said they had never seen a worse hip in their lives," Knievel said. "They tell me I won't be able to walk for four months. I'll cut that in half."

Giant egg auctioned for record $53,000

PARIS (AFP) — Extinct since the 17th century, the Madagascan cousin of the ostrich, the aepyornis left behind a valuable legacy — a huge egg, sold at a Paris auction Friday for $53,000. The 34.5 centimetre tall egg was uncovered in 1916 by Madagascar's administrator.